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# AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

by HEINZ ULRICH

The thrill and excitement of fishing have long made it one of the most popular of all sports. Few men can resist the challenge and reward of pitting their skills against the swift-moving creatures of the sea.

Heinz Ulrich, whose angling ability and vast knowledge of the fishing areas of the United States make him eminently qualified as an expert, has produced in *America's Best Bay, Surf, and Shoreline Fishing* an invaluable guide to inshore fish and inshore fishing. Too much literature in the past has been devoted to the techniques of catching offshore deep-sea monsters, the expensive kind of fishing that few ever get a chance to do. This book is devoted to shoreline fishing—the kind of fishing all of us do. It is for the angler who likes to do his fishing from the surf, a jetty, a pier, a small skiff to bottom fish, or go after near-shore sportfish in charter boats.

Encyclopedic in scope, the book completely describes the habits and properties of over eighty of the most popular coastal fish—such species as bluefish, striped bass, channel bass, flounder, mackerel, bonefish, tarpon, cabezon, and king and silver salmon. Each of these excellent sportfish can be caught on or near the shoreline. Also included is a compilation of the best places to go salt-water fishing, listing 135 coastal resorts with a detailed account of their facilities and exactly what species of fish are abundant during any season. The book thoroughly describes each important coastal sportfish and, in addition, provides all necessary information on angling tactics, techniques, and equipment. This national guide to coastal fishing covers the entire United States from New England to the Gulf to the Pacific Coast, and describes every aspect of inshore fishing as only an expert of Heinz Ulrich's stature can.

*America's Best Bay, Surf, and Shoreline Fishing*, with its many fine action photographs, is certain to make fascinating reading for every angler. As guide for anyone planning a salt-water fishing vacation, it is an incomparable source of information to increase the skill and pleasure of fishing.

**America's Best  
Bay, Surf, and Shoreline Fishing**







# America's Best Bay, Surf, and Shoreline Fishing

by HEINZ ULRICH

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**To My Wife**



## Preface

*America's Best Bay, Surf, and Shoreline Fishing* is a book about inshore fish and inshore fishing. This book is for the fisherman who likes to do his fishing from the surf, a jetty, a pier or a small skiff. It is for those fishermen who enjoy going out in a party boat to bottom fish and also for those who like to go after near-shore sports fish in charter boats. In short, it is about all the excellent sports fish that can be caught by a fisherman who doesn't care to get involved in expensive deep-sea expeditions.

The book specializes in such species as bluefish, striped bass, channel bass, flounder, mackerel, bonefish, tarpon, cabezon, and king and silver salmon. Each of these excellent sports fish can be caught on the shoreline or just a short way off.

The book includes the best places to go salt-water fishing, listing 135 coastal resorts and describing their facilities and exactly what species of fish are abundant during any season. The book thoroughly analyzes each important coastal sports fish and tells how to catch them. It is an important guide for the fisherman who is planning a salt-water fishing vacation anywhere in the United States.

H. U.



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Evening surfcasting. Surfcasting demonstration. The follow-through. The retrieve. Holding a spinning rod and reel. Removing hooks. Cleaning the fish. Newport jetty anglers. The King salmon. Blue rockfish. California sea bass. Pollack. Striped bass. Atlantic salmon. Porgy. Bluefish caught by trolling. Bluefish caught in the surf. Renee Ulrich and her catch. Pompano. Bonefish. Sheepshead. Snook. Cobia. Spotted Jewfish. Cod. Fluke. Barracuda. Tarpon. Channel bass. Sea trout.



## **Part I**

### ***Guide of Coastal Fishing***

All the state chambers of commerce were mailed a post card requesting fishing information about their state.

The chamber of commerce of each state was rated according to the following schedule:

- A If they mailed complete information pertaining to salt-water fishing in their state. A fisherman had to be able to plan a trip based on the information received.
- B If the information received was helpful to a fisherman but not enough to plan a trip.
- C If the information received from the state was vague.

## New England Coastal Fishing

The first European settlers, the Pilgrims, fished New England's waters, and what fishing it was, too! Salmon choked the rivers; stripers ran so big it sometimes took two men to haul them out of the water; and lobsters were so plentiful it became a disgrace to serve them to company.

Today's fishing, of course, doesn't compare; but New England still offers some of the best fishing in the country. It has an endless coastline that comes down from Maine past Boston and swings out a hundred miles into Cape Cod peninsula and then recedes into Long Island Sound taking in the entire coasts of Connecticut and Rhode Island. Fish along here include the cold-water species; cod, pollack and mackerel, as well as fish that like the warmer waters, such as bluefish and fluke. Generally Cape Cod is considered to be a dividing line, with more of the warmer-water fish staying south of the Cape and the cold-water fish staying north of it.

*Species along these shores include:*

*Atlantic Salmon*, once the most famous sports fish of the Atlantic Coast, is now found in only seven of Maine's rivers, which are the Machias, East Machias, Narraguagus, Dennys, Sheepscot, Pleasant and Penobscot rivers. These fish have become scarce in recent years. Average weight of fish is 10 pounds, with some going to 22 pounds. Season starts about April 1.

*Blackfish or Tautog* are found anywhere along New England coast wherever there are rocks. They range in size from 2 to 20 pounds. Good fishing from May to November.

*Bluefish* are caught along south shore of Cape Cod and into Long Island Sound. A 5-pounder is a good-sized fish, and some will attain a weight of 18 pounds. August to September is the season.

*Bluefish (Snapper)*. These 1-pound blues are caught abundantly

in the inshore waters south of Cape Cod. Same season as the big blues.

*Cod*—they range from Maine to Cape Cod, with Maine being the best place in the country for them. The fish come inshore in the spring or can be taken offshore all year. Fifty-pounders are not uncommon.

*Flounder (winter)* are caught along the whole coast. North of the Cape it is an all-year fish, while in Long Island Sound it is a spring and fall resident. One to 2 pounds is the average size for this fish.

*Flounder (summer or fluke)*. For best catches, stay on the south side of Cape Cod or fish in Long Island Sound. They are commonly caught from 2 to 5 pounds and some go as large as 20 pounds.

*Kingfish of Whiting* are caught all along the shore of Long Island Sound and even run into the Connecticut and adjacent rivers. They run about a pound and the best fishing for them is from June to October.

*Mackerel* run along the Atlantic shore of New England and into Long Island Sound. Maine is noted for its mackerel fishing. They run from 1 to 4 pounds. The season is from June to September.

*Pollack*. Best catches north of Cape Cod from May to October with high spots during the May and September runs. They weigh 4 to 20 pounds.

*Porgy* are caught abundantly in Cape Cod waters from May to October. The fish average 1 to 4 pounds.

*Sea Bass* run from Cape Cod south all along Long Island Sound, June to September. These fish are sometimes considered the backbone of the party-boat fleet. The record sea bass an 8-pounder was taken in Nantucket Sound.

*Shad* are caught in the Connecticut River during May and June.

*Smelt* are found in river mouths along the coast in the winter. These small fish run from November to April.

*Striped Bass*, a glamor fish of the New England Coast, is caught abundantly from May to October. The world record striper was caught off Massachusetts.

*Weakfish* are found in Cape Cod Bay and Nantucket Sound.

They run from June through September. The biggest they ever come is 20 pounds, but 2- to 8-pounders are average.

Fishing along Maine's 300 miles of coastline (2,500 miles if the bays and peninsulas are measured) offers cold-water fishing in a quaint scenic wonderland. One of the most interesting ways to fish along the state's coast is to fish in some small coastal hamlet by renting a boat from a lobsterman. I have fished this way at Westpoint, Northport and other towns south of Bar Harbor too small even to have a name. One thing they all have in common is that the fishing is good and you enjoy your sport in quiet solitude by a community that lives off the sea.

Bar Harbor in the north of Maine offers excellent facilities for the sport fishermen. There are several charter boats and skiffs in this uncrowded resort. From here it is only a short drive to the Bangor salmon pool.

Boothbay Harbor is a famous fishing center of Maine which specializes in deep-sea expeditions. Captain David Nutt leaves Boothbay Harbor every spring for scientific expeditions in the Arctic. Charter boats leave the wharves daily. Bank fishing from skiffs or other small boats offers abundant cod, pollack, and hake.

York Harbor, just above Kittery in southern Maine, has the state's largest charter-boat fleet. Six boats leave Lord's wharf while others leave Philbrick's and Sewall's wharves. Skiffs are available for inshore flounder, cunner and mackerel fishing. This area of southern Maine is noted for good striped bass fishing in the summers.

Massachusetts: The best-known, best-equipped, and most famous fishing center in New England is Cape Cod. Many hotels cater especially to fishermen and have skiffs available for the shoreline fisherman. Buzzards Bay on the south shore of the Cape has excellent fishing facilities which include four charter boats and over a hundred skiffs. Provincetown, located at the tip of the Cape, offers accommodations for fishermen desiring striped bass, bluefish or pollack. There are three party boats available for bottom fishing, three charter boats for sports fishing; and at the Race Point Coast Guard station, Joe Drew operates a beach-buggy service



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for striped fishermen. Along the northern portion of the Cape, Barnstable on Barnstable Harbor is for those caring for striped bass or blackfish. Facilities here include four charter boats, skiffs and dories.

The city of Boston has nine party boats that leave daily for deep-sea bottom fishing.

Historic Plymouth is still known for its good striped bass, mackerel and flounder fishing. Facilities include a very large fleet of nineteen party boats, three charter boats, skiffs and dories.

Farther north on Cape Ann, Rockport, the well-known art colony, and Gloucester offer good striped bass, mackerel, cod and flounder fishing. There are eight party boats available there, two charter boats and several dozen skiffs.

If the choice is to get away from it all and live on an island, then Martha's Vineyard, located off the south coast of Massachusetts is the spot. Here, their annual striped bass and bluefish derby runs from September 15 to October 15. Prices on the island are reasonable and the hotels cater strictly to the fisherman. Good for blues, blackfish, stripers, fluke and flounders.

In Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island, the fishing is for stripers, bluefish, snappers, weakfish and flounders. This is a famous New England vacation area and a full line of fishing facilities are available, including charter and party boats as well as skiffs, and good beaches for surf fishing.

All along the towns and cities of Rhode Island and Connecticut, including New London, New Haven and Bridgeport, there are facilities to accommodate the near-shore fisherman who fishes for snappers, weakfish or flounders.

Other specific information from:

*Rated*

Department of Economic Development  
State House  
Augusta, Maine

A

Boothbay Harbor Region  
Chamber of Commerce  
Boothbay Harbor, Maine

Department of Commerce  
334 Boylston Street  
Boston 16, Massachusetts

A

Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce  
298 Main Street  
Hyannis, Massachusetts

Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce  
Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts

State Development Council  
Information Division  
State House  
Providence, Rhode Island

C

Development Commission  
State Office Building  
Hartford 15, Connecticut

C

Information for anywhere in New England:

New England Council  
Statler Building  
Boston 16, Massachusetts

### **New York and New Jersey Coastal Fishing**

To a fisherman New York City is nothing more than an overgrown fishing village. New Amsterdam started that way and in today's New York a subway ride in any direction can still bring you to some pretty good fishing waters. East of the city there are the one hundred miles of Long Island with Long Island Sound fishing on the north shore and ocean fishing along the south shore. To the south of the city the whole eastern coast of New Jersey offers excellent ocean fishing and draws vacationers from all over the country to its many resort areas.

Throughout this area the fishing is good and the facilities for the fisherman cannot be equaled anywhere else.

Species along these shores include:

*Blackfish (Tautog)* are found along Long Island's coast and along the New Jersey coast. Good fishing throughout the spring, summer and fall. The record tautog was a 21-pounder taken at Cape May, New Jersey.

*Bluefish*. Excellent catches all along Long Island, on the south and north shores and the Jersey coast. The season is from July to September. The average fish weighs 3 to 6 pounds.

*Bluefish (Snapper)*. Small bluefish caught in the inshore water of Long Island and New Jersey. The season is the same as for the big fellows.

*Eels* are caught along the whole Atlantic Coast with the best catches begin in the autumn. Some attain a size of 6 feet in length.

*Flounder (Winter)* are found all along the area. The best catches are brought in during March and April and again in October and November. The average 1 to 2 pounds.

*Flounder (Summer or Fluke)*. The south shore of Long Island and the New Jersey shore are famous for them. Their season runs from June to September. The record fluke, a 20-pounder, was taken at Oak Beach, New York.

*Herring*. The spring and fall varieties are present. Shad also come here but do not take a hook.

*Kingfish or Whiting* are plentiful throughout the area, but have become scarce in New York City waters. They are caught during the summer months. They weigh about a pound.

*Mackerel*. Good fishing in Long Island Sound in August and September. One to 4 pounds is their average weight.

*Porgies* are caught all along area near any mussel beds or wrecks. A very popular summer fish, runs from June to October. Their average weights vary from 1 to 4 pounds.

*Sea Bass* are abundant in all the bays as well as in the open water of New York and New Jersey. They run from June to September and weigh 1 to 2 pounds.

*Smelt*—a small fish also known as the frostfish. It is plentiful off Long Island from November to March.

*Striped Bass*. Excellent fishing at Montauk Point, Long Island, and along both shores of the Island as well as the Jersey Coast.

Runs extend from April to October. Fifty-pounders are occasionally taken.

*Tom Cod.* A small fish that frequents these shores from December to March.

*Weakfish.* A highly regarded fish that has become scarce around New York City. Good fishing in Peconic Bay and parts of New Jersey. Season extends from May to September. A record 17½-pounder was taken at the Mullica River, New Jersey.

The biggest fishing center in the country is New York City. For sheer number of boats and fishermen it beats every other sports-fishing center. It offers amazingly good fishing for so populated an area. At Jamaica Bay, the Rockaways, Coney Island or City Island there are armies of party boats, charter boats, skiffs and rowboats awaiting the fisherman. There are even adequate beaches for surf fishing in the Rockaways and Little Neck Bay.

Long Island, jutting out 100 miles into the Atlantic, offers all sort of fishing from its shores. On the north shore, bordering Long Island Sound, there are facilities at Oyster Bay, Port Washington, and Port Jefferson. Much of the fishing done here is for the favorites—blackfish, flounder and striped bass.

Along the south shore good fishing ports of call are the Rockaways, Long Beach, Amityville, Bay Shore (where Fire Island fishing in Great South Bay has become nationally famous), Sayville, the Hampton's and Shinnecock Canal. Blues, kingfish, sea bass, blackfish, mackerel, porgies, eels and stripers are plentiful.

In eastern Long Island on Great Peconic Bay there is excellent weakfishing and porgy fishing. The best facilities are at Greenport, Southold, Jamesport, and Orient Point.

At the farthest eastern point of Long Island there is famous Montauk Point, equipped with fishing facilities that would be difficult to equal anywhere else. There are countless motels. More than twenty charter boats, a dozen party boats, skiffs and rowboats are also available. There are jetties and the beaches at Montauk that are made for the surfcaster, for big stripers seem to hide behind every wave. The rip where the Atlantic Ocean meets Long Island Sound is by the lighthouse and is one of the best-known bluefish

and striper areas on the Atlantic Coast. From Montauk every kind of fish available in the New York and New Jersey area is caught.

The New Jersey coast borders the ocean its entire north-to-south distance and offers excellent fishing from practically all of its many seaside resorts.

Asbury Park has some of the finest surf and jetty fishing anywhere. Nearby Avon acts as a harbor for many party and charter boats. Blues and porgies are the specialties.

Barnegat and Barnegat Light are fishing centers halfway between Asbury and Atlantic City. These resorts offer sixty party boats, six charter boats and two hundred rowboats for the fisherman.

Atlantic City, if you can tear yourself away from the Miss America Contest (September 1 to 15) has all kinds of fishing. There are available twelve party boats, fifty charter boats as well as five hundred rowboats and skiffs. Atlantic City also offers good surf fishing from its fine beaches, good jetty fishing and good pier fishing. The area is productive for fluke, sea bass, flounder, bluefish, stripers, and porgies.

Ocean City is a sports-fishing center for Jersey shore vacationers. Nine party boats, eight charter boats as well as two hundred rowboats and skiffs handle any fisherman's desire.

Cape May on the southern tip of New Jersey offers Atlantic Ocean fishing as well as Delaware Bay fishing. There are as many as eighty party boats, twenty-five charter boats and over five hundred rowboats available for fishermen. Stripers, blues and black drum run big here. The world record black drumfish, a 92-pounder was taken in Delaware Bay.

Other specific information from:

*Rated*

Department of Commerce  
Division of State Publicity  
112 State Street  
Albany 1, New York

B

Montauk Chamber of Commerce  
Montauk Point, New York

State Promotion Section  
Department of Conservation  
520 East State Street  
Trenton 25, New Jersey

B

Also—

(Any resort listed) Chamber of Commerce  
(Name of resort), New Jersey.

### The Middle Atlantic States

Fishing in Maryland or Virginia means being treated to some Chesapeake Bay fishing where the striped bass and croakers school so thick they become panfish. Chesapeake Bay has been termed as one of the world's great fishing traps, luring millions of pounds of fish into its fertile waters annually. Sportsmen from all over the country come here to partake in its excellent shoreline fishing.

Fishing in North Carolina means warm-water fishing and a chance to hook into 100 pounds of tarpon or channel bass. Warm-water fish come to the North Carolina shore when they follow the Gulf Stream north. At one point the Gulf Stream is only twelve miles from the Carolina shore and consequently its shoreline is thick with warm-water fish.

Species along these shores include:

*Black Drum* are caught in bays and inlets of the area. The season is all year. The fish sometimes attain the weight of 70 pounds but species over 10 pounds sometimes have a tendency to be wormy.

*Bluefish* are caught in all the bays, ocean bays and inlets of the area from May to September. Three- to 6-pound fish are average size.

*Channel Bass (Red Drum)* are caught throughout Chesapeake Bay and off North Carolina from March to June. A famous place for them is Oregon Inlet, North Carolina. Fish sometimes attain a weight of 50 to 75 pounds.

*Cobia* are found in Chesapeake Bay and North Carolina waters during the summer months. A hot spot for them is Cape Charles.

The average catch weighs 10 pounds and sometimes attains a weight of 100 pounds.

*Croaker* are caught throughout the area in bays and inlets from March though August. These fish sometimes school up so thick they literally swarm through the water. The maximum size for them is about 6 pounds; average size is 2 pounds.

*Flounder (Summer)*. A popular inshore fish from May to October. The average-size fish caught is 5 pounds, with some weighing 8 pounds.

*King Mackerel* comes into the bays and works close enough to shore to be taken from skiffs and while surf casting. Excellent fishing from Moorhead City, North Carolina. The season for the kings is July to September. Commonly taken from 10 to 15 pounds.

*Sea Bass*. A popular summer resident of the bays and inlets throughout the area during the summer months. One to 2 pounds is their average size.

*Spot*. Good fishing in the Potomac and York rivers during the summer months. The fish are present from May to October. They usually weigh under a pound.

*Striped Bass*, known throughout the area as *Rockfish*, breed in Chesapeake Bay, where the fishing is excellent. The fish are present all year but are most plentiful in the fall and winter. Small fish, 1 to 4 pounds, are taken as well as 50-pound giants. Striped Bass are protected by Maryland game laws and the maximum legal size that may be kept is 15 pounds. All over that size are considered breeders and must be thrown back.

*Tarpon*. These big silver fighters are taken in North Carolina waters during the summer months. These inshore fish sometimes attain a weight of 100 pounds.

*Tautog (Blackfish)* are caught over rocky bottoms throughout area from May to October. They vary in size from 2 to 20 pounds.

Ocean City, Maryland, on the Atlantic Coast, halfway between Delaware Bay and Chesapeake Bay, offers good ocean fishing. There is a sizable fleet of party and charter boats as well as skiffs available at this resort. Piers are available for fishing, as well as

good beaches. Fish caught here include: flounder, sea bass, porgy, weakfish, striped bass, and croaker.

The Cape Charles Peninsula, which includes Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia is divided into two sports-fishing areas. The Atlantic Ocean side, Chincoteague Island, Virginia, and Wachapreague, Virginia, are excellent places for weakfish, kingfish, and channel bass. There are approximately twenty boats available at each sports center. On the bay side of the peninsula at *Cape Charles* there are hotels and all sports-fishing facilities, including thirteen boats for bay and ocean fishing. It was from Cape Charles that a world-record cobia (102 pounds) and the world-record channel bass (83 pounds) were taken.

Three peninsulas of Virginia offer good Chesapeake Bay fishing. The most northern of these stretches from the Potomac River south to the Rappahannock River. Complete accommodations for the fisherman are at Colonial Beach (five boats), Coles Point (six boats), Irvington (seven boats), and *Weems* (four boats). The middle of the three peninsulas stretches from the Rappahannock River south to the York River. There are facilities at Urbanna (seven boats), Deltaville (two boats plus twelve extra during the summer months) and Gloucester Point (two boats). The most famous of the three peninsulas is the southern one where York, Virginia, is located. Here is where George Washington accepted the surrender of the British to end the Revolutionary War. There are good fishing facilities on this peninsula at Messick (three boats) and Hampton (seven boats and skiffs). The fish caught along the three peninsulas are the Chesapeake Bay specialties and include striped bass, croaker, weakfish, bluefish, spot, flounder, kingfish, sea bass, channel bass and black drum.

Norfolk and Virginia Beach are the largest and most famous resort centers of Virginia. They have accommodations for the fishermen that include twenty charter boats and party boats that leave daily for ocean and Chesapeake Bay fishing. There are skiffs for inshore fishing. This area has 18 hotels, 94 motor courts, and a selection of 663 restaurants for the visitors to choose from. Fish taken here include croaker, weakfish, bluefish, spot, flounder and channel bass.



Fishing in North Carolina is good the whole length of the coast, but for the visiting fisherman it centers on three places. The farthest north is the famous islands of Cape Hatteras where fishing is the whole life of the natives. The best fishing is in Oregon Inlet and Hatteras Inlet, where channel bass run record size. Other fish taken include bluefish, cobia, pompano, croaker, mackerel, sheepshead, spot, flounder, and weakfish.

Moorhead City, located about the middle of the Carolina coast offers good fishing and the largest fishing fleet in the state. A popular fish is the big king mackerel, known locally only as cero. Other fish include, flounder, sheepshead, croaker, weakfish, bluefish, and channel bass.

In the Wilmington vicinity of North Carolina there is good fishing at such places as Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach, Long Beach, Holden Beach, and Cape Fear. Throughout this area there are many bridges and dozens of fishing piers from which drum and flounders are caught. Weakfish, blackfish, drum, croakers and channel bass can be taken when fishing from the skiffs that can be rented in the area. Good-sized tarpon are taken in Carolina waters. Offshore, the mackerel, red snapper, and bluefish await the angler who ventures out in one of the many charter or party boats available in the area.

Other specific information from:	<i>Rated</i>
Department of Information P.O. Box 706, State Office Building Annapolis, Maryland	A
State Travel Bureau	A
Department of Conservation and Development Raleigh, North Carolina	
Department of Conservation & Development 820 State Office Building Richmond 19, Virginia	A

Delaware State Development Department  
Dover, Delaware

C

### The Southern Atlantic States

Florida is the sports center of tropical and semitropical fishing in the world. There are fish of so many varieties in its waters that a fisherman never knows what his next strike will bring. On the Atlantic Coast, semitropical fishing extends along the states of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida down to about Miami. Tarpon, bluefish, redfish, striped bass and croaker run the whole length of this coastline. The fishing is tropical in nature from Miami south and taking in the whole Keys. In this area good catches of barracuda, jack crevallé, Spanish mackerel, redfish, snook, permit, weakfish, tarpon and mangrove snapper are taken. Fishing on the Western side of Florida means Gulf of Mexico fishing, and from this warm dreamlike tropical sea there can be pulled up droves of sea trout, redfish, pompano, Spanish markerel, jack crevallé, bluefish, flounder, ladyfish, tarpon, snook, grouper, mangrove snapper and whiting. And from the same water just a short way offshore on the reefs, there are kingfish, warsaw (guasa) grouper, cobia, amberjack, and bonito.

Species along these shores include:

*Barracuda*. A killer fish that readily strikes any prey. It is found on both coasts of Florida and moves inshore to breed in the late spring. Best fishing is in the Florida Keys where they form into loose schools. The average fish weighs about 5 pounds but some attain a weight of 100 pounds.

*Black Drum* are present all year round in the inlets of Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. These fish sometimes weigh up to 70 pounds.

*Bluefish* are caught on the coasts of South Carolina, Georgia, and both coasts of Florida. They are caught off Florida in the winter months and school up there in March and April for the trip north. They average 3 to 6 pounds.

*Bonefish* are caught on the lower tip of Florida, in the Keys, and

in the Gulf north to about the Ten Thousand Island area. A top sports fish, it is extremely difficult to catch. The average fish weighs 2 to 5 pounds, while some go up to 15 pounds.

*Cobia*. A record number of these fish are taken off the Florida west coast during the spring runs. Hot spots are around Pensacola and Panama City where they sometimes run to 75 pounds. These fish are also caught in quantity on the Atlantic Coast.

*Croaker*—a bottom fish found along both coasts all year long. It frequents sandy and shell-covered bottoms. They average 2 pounds.

*Flounder*—an excellent eating fish found in both deep and shallow water off both shores, all year long. The fish weigh 2 to 3 pounds.

*Jack Crevallé*—excellent fishing on the west coast of Florida from March to September. These fish frequent both shores of the state and will run up to 50 pounds. They are famous for their hard dives and tackle-busting ability.

*Ladyfish*. A Gulf fish found in bays and inlets and offshore. It is often taken from the beaches on the Gulf. They seldom exceed 3 pounds.

*Mackerel*, *King Mackerel* are abundant on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The best fishing for them is in the Keys. The season for kings is April and May and again in the fall. They run from 8 to 10 pounds and sometimes up to 50 pounds.

*Mackerel*, *Spanish Mackerel* run north along the Atlantic Coast and the Gulf in April and run south along these same coasts in October. These fish are smaller than the kings and average 2 to 4 pounds.

*Pompano*, *Common Pompano* are taken in the spring months in the inshore waters along both coasts. The area around Tampa is very productive and generally Gulf Coast fishing is best for them.

*Pompano*, *Giant Pompano* (or *Permit*) are caught in the Florida Keys area. They are rather scarce but are a real prize, worth hiring a guide to go after. They regularly run up to 25 pounds and some go bigger.

- *Channel Bass* are caught off both Florida coasts. The f this species migrate north in the spring and south

in the fall. They are present in lower Florida all year, but the best fishing is from November to April.

*Sea trout or Weakfish*—are caught along both shores south to about Miami. Pensacola is a hot spot for them during the fall months. The fish weigh 1 to 8 pounds.

*Sheepshead*, a year-round resident, are often taken by pier and bridge fishermen but are difficult to catch because of the small mouth. They are found on both coasts as far south as the Keys, and sometimes attain a weight of 20 pounds.

*Snapper*. A variety of snappers abound in Florida, including *Red Reef Snapper*, *Mangrove Snapper*, and *Dog Snapper*. They are bottom fish, generally caught on the reefs of the more southern portions of Florida.

*Snook*. A sports fish taken offshore and in inshore waters of Florida from St. Augustine south. They are often caught in rivers, beneath bridges and docks. Snook are good fighters and hit a large assortment of plugs. These year-round fish run to 30 pounds, with the average catch about 5 pounds.

*Striped Bass* are present from South Carolina down to St. Augustine. The St. Johns River is famous for them during the November-to-January season. Average fish caught weigh anywhere from 2 to 20 pounds.

*Tarpon* are caught from June to August in the area from Myrtle Beach to St. Augustine and all year round in the southern portions of Florida. The big ones are generally caught between March and August. The Ten Thousand Island area is one of the best spots in the country for them. A 100-pounder is not uncommon, and a 210-pounder has already been taken in Florida waters.

*Whiting* are taken in the upper Gulf areas along the coasts throughout the year. They seldom weigh more than two pounds.

The four hundred miles or more of coastline that includes the states of South Carolina and Georgia are semitropical in every way, including water temperature and types of fish caught.

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, is the best-equipped and most famous fishing resort along these waters. It has a full line of hotels, motels, and restaurants for the vacationer. Fishing is done

from piers, off the beach, from skiffs, or from its many party or charter boats. At Myrtle Beach, the biggest fishing boat of the Atlantic Coast—the *Ocean Queen*—takes anglers out to their fishing grounds daily.

Other fishing centers along these shores include McClellanville, South Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; and Savannah, Georgia.

The fish caught include channel bass, bluefish, weakfish, tarpon (good in Charleston Harbor), pompano (near Myrtle Beach), cobia, and striped bass.

Jacksonville, Florida, is the city that serves nearby fishing places like Jacksonville Beach, Mayport, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, and the St. Johns River. There are adequate accommodations for fishermen at Jacksonville. The facilities include skiffs and charter boats. Redfish, bluefish, drum, weakfish, kingfish, Spanish mackerel, tarpon, croakers, and striped bass (especially good in the St. Johns River) are caught here.

Historic St. Augustine with its old forts standing majestically in the bay is a semitropical fisherman's dream. There are enough facilities to handle every need in boats, skiffs, lodging and food. The area is like other Florida areas and is famous for its beach fishing. Big blues and redfish are pulled in regularly.

Fort Pierce, Vero Beach, and the Indian River Section at Stuart, Florida, offer excellent fishing opportunities. Boats and skiffs are available at these resorts. The Indian River area, which is really a deep salt-water bay, offers some of the best inland salt-water fishing anywhere in the country. It is world famous for its snook, tarpon, and channel bass fishing. Also taken along these waters are weakfish, pompano, mackerel, and bluefish.

Farther south on the Atlantic Coast of Florida there are Fort Lauderdale, Palm Beach, and wonderful Miami. Fishing is one of the prime draws of these resorts, and in all three a fisherman can find anything he wants in the way of facilities. There are skiffs, party boats, and charter boats. Miami is especially famous for its deep-sea expeditions for offshore fish. The fish taken along these shores are about the same as those in the Indian River area, except that bonefishing is good around Miami.

The Florida Keys are known as the bonefishing center of the United States. Only in these islands and in a small portion of southern Florida are these prizes present in sufficient quantity to become worthwhile sport. Permit and barracuda fishing is popular here along the hundred-mile roadway that brings tourists from the mainland to the islands. On the Keys there is intense interest in sports fishing and great pride is taken in the catches. Hotel accommodations are adequate at the bigger population centers of the Keys, and boats are available. Bonefish (April to July), barracuda, snook, jack crevallé, permit and tarpon make up the chief sports fish.

At Everglades, in the Gulf of Mexico, and around the Ten Thousand Islands area, the fishing is supreme. Here the bays and inwaters are choked with tarpon and channel bass. In spite of its somber-sounding name, Everglades offers vacation facilities and boats to hire. There are excellent guides available to bring a fisherman into the mangrove swamps to try for record tarpon. Fish caught here include tarpon (April to September), pompano, kingfish, weakfish, cobia, and Spanish mackerel.

Tampa and St. Petersburg, in Tampa Bay, offer excellent bay fishing. Just a short drive south at Sarasota there is ample opportunity to fish for the Gulf specialties. Boats and skiffs are available at all these resorts. The fish caught are basically the same as those in the Ten Thousand Island area.

In northwestern Florida fishing is renowned at Pensacola and Panama City. Both places offer ample tourist accommodations in hotels, motels, and restaurants. There is good inshore fishing and bay fishing and it is possible to fish from the many bridges, piers, and beaches in these areas. Skiffs and charter boats can be rented at both places. The fish northwestern Florida is famous for include: weakfish, kingfish, tarpon, flounder, red snapper, sheepshead, jewfish, and pompano.

Other specific information from:

*Rated*

State Development Board  
Wade Hampton Office Bulding  
Columbia, South Carolina

B

Georgia Department of Commerce C  
 100 State Capitol  
 Atlanta 3, Georgia

Florida Development Commission A  
 Caldwell Building  
 Tallahassee, Florida

Jensen Beach Area Chamber of Commerce  
 Jensen Beach, Florida

City of Miami Publicity Dept.  
 320 N.E. Fifth Street  
 Miami 32, Florida

Any other city or town in Florida  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 Florida.

## The Gulf States

The 500 miles of coastline on the Gulf of Mexico that stretches from Gulf Shores, Alabama, to Port Isabel, Texas, offers a seemingly endless variety of piscatorial delight. Fish in this body of water can be caught in its many inland waterways, along the beaches, and on the reefs. The weather in the area is as pleasant as the water, and temperatures seldom dip below 50 degrees F. in the winter; and strangely, throughout much of the coast, it seldom goes over 90 degrees in the summer.

Gulf fishing basically breaks down into three distinctive types of fishing. The first is inshore fishing for weakfish, redfish, flounder and drum. Fishing of the second type is for those fish that stay offshore and come in for food and to breed; these include Spanish mackerel, cero, jack crevallé and bluefish. The third kind of fishing is for reef fish, which include snappers, groupers and jewfish.

Species along these shores include:

*Black Drum* are caught all along the coast over grassy bottoms, the shallows, and especially near bridges. They are present all

year but the best fishing is from January to April. An average-size fish weighs 5 to 10 pounds.

*Bluefish* are present from April to July but the large ones are mostly caught offshore. The fish occasionally weigh up to 20 pounds.

*Channel Bass or Redfish* are caught along the coast in bays, around sand bars, and from the surf all year round, with the best fishing during the fall. They are popular fish with pier fishermen. An average-size fish weighs anywhere from 5 to 20 pounds.

*Cobia* are taken mostly in the summer in channels, mangroves, over mud flats, and in inlets. Good catches occur in the Mobile area in the spring during the migrations. They are commonly taken in the 5- to 10-pound categories.

*Flounder* are present all year and are commonly taken over sandy and silty bottoms all along the coast.

*Jack Crevallé*—are present from April to November during which time the schools travel the length of the Gulf. The small jack running up to several pounds are caught in riverheads, inlets, and channels; whereas the big fish up to 40 pounds tend to stay offshore.

*Jewfish*, the *Black Jewfish*, and the *Spotted Jewfish* are the monsters of the grouper family; some of the spotted variety reach 750 pounds. Most jewfish caught weigh between 20 and 100 pounds. Best fishing is around jetties, pilings, wrecks, or at channel edges. They are present all year.

*Kingfish* or *King Mackerel* are caught on the reefs of the Gulf from May to September. They are the popular prey of the charter-boat fleet of the Texas coast, where they are brought in by the boatload. They generally weigh between 5 and 15 pounds.

*Ladyfish* are present all year in the bays over grassy bottoms. This is a small fish, usually under 3 pounds.

*Pompano* are caught in the bays and from the surf all along the coast during the whole year, but the best fishing for them is during the Summer. They run about 3 pounds in weight.

*Sheepshead*. Fishing is best from causeways, bridges, or in the shallows from skiffs. These fish are present all year but the best



fishing takes place during the fall and winter. An average-size fish weighs 6 pounds.

*Snook* are caught in the inshore waters near bridges, river cuts, in bays, or over the flats. They are present all year but the best fishing is in the summer months. A popular place for them is the coast of Mississippi and Louisiana. They commonly weigh about 5 pounds.

*Spanish Mackerel* are caught during the spring, summer, and fall in the bays, from the beaches, and on the reefs of the Gulf. They generally weigh 2 to 4 pounds.

*Tarpon* are caught in the spring until the fall throughout the Gulf area. They are a prize sports fish, taken on very light tackle in the channels, bays and shallows of the Gulf. The fish often weigh more than 100 pounds. The Texas season extends from June to November, while the Alabama season is July to December.

*Weakfish* or *Sea Trout* are caught all year round in the inshore waters in bays and inlets over grass beds. Although they are present all year, the best fishing takes place in the spring and late fall. They weigh 2 to 8 pounds.

Gulf Shores and Bon Secor, Alabama, on Bon Secor Bay, are near Gulf State Park, Alabama. Here reasonably priced accommodations in cottages or motels are available. There are miles of beautiful sand beaches for surf fishing, and inshore rivers and canals for other kinds of shore fishing. Twenty-eight charter boats stand by for trips to the excellent fishing water located just offshore. A speckled-trout rodeo (weakfish) is a big prize event every November. Other fish caught include: bluefish, pompano, mackerel, channel bass, jack crevallé, cobia, red snapper, weakfish, stripers, and flounder.

Mobile, Alabama, is a large metropolis that offers a complete line of facilities for the fisherman, available for Mobile Bay fishing as well as for Gulf fishing. Fish caught in the area include cobia, flounder, sea trout, redfish, kingfish, whiting, sheepshead, tarpon, pompano, jewfish, snook, and red snapper.

Biloxi, Mississippi, a resort town that has all facilities for sport

fishing. Other coastal resorts in Mississippi include Gulf Port, Long Beach and Pass Christian.

New Orleans, Louisiana, is sometimes called the New York of the South, and to a vacationer it is a city supreme. A fisherman can expect to find a complete line of facilities there. Bay fishing is available in Lake Pontchartrain, and Gulf fishing is available from the boats that leave the city. Deep-sea expeditions are especially good. The fish caught are similar to those at Mobile.

Morgan City, Louisiana, is the home of a large shrimp-boat fleet and is the place of the annual celebration of the blessing of the shrimp boats. Adequate accommodations are here for the tourist, and boats can be chartered by a fisherman. The fish caught are again those of the Northern Gulf and are listed under Mobile, Alabama.

Galveston, Texas, is an island city on the Gulf with excellent fishing directly in the Gulf or in Trinity Bay. Fishing areas can be reached from skiffs or the charter boats available there. The city has seven large free fishing piers from which many Gulf whoppers are taken annually. Species the area is most famous for include: tarpon, redfish, red snapper, flounder, pompano, drum, sheepshead, sea trout, mackerel, and kingfish.

Port Lávaca and Palácios, Texas, on Matagorda Bay offer good beach fishing in the bay as well as Gulf surf fishing from Matagorda Island. Boats and guides are available at the sports center in Palácios. Fishing is best for sea trout, redfish, tarpon, flounder, mackerel, and drum.

Corpus Christi and Port Aransas, Texas, on Corpus Christi Bay have excellent tropical bay fishing; or, a short distance away, offer Gulf fishing outside Mustang Island. Port Aransas has several hotels and two dozen motels for the tourists, who are guaranteed complete enjoyment of this palm-tree-lined tropical paradise. Port Aransas boasts the largest charter-boat fleet in the Gulf with more than forty-two boats in the fleet. Write to Aransas Boatman's Association for complete details and current rates. From a 1,200-foot fishing pier are caught sea trout, redfish, whiting, and tarpon; while from the Gulf there come the bluefish, pompano, and snappers.

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Port Isabel and Brazoport, Texas, are the most southerly fishing centers of the United States. They are just a short distance above Brownsville and the Rio Grande, where the famous Valley Bridge connects us with Mexico. Charter boats for Gulf fishing, skiffs for bay fishing, and beaches for surf fishing are available in this tropical haven. The fish caught are the same as those listed under Corpus Christi.

Other specific information from:	<i>Rated</i>
State Chamber of Commerce 468 So. Perry Street Montgomery 1, Alabama	A
Tourist Association Gulf Shores, Alabama	
Mobile Chamber of Commerce Mobile, Alabama	
Service Manager Department of Highways Box 4245, Capitol Station Baton Rouge 4, Louisiana	C
Chamber of Commerce 315 Camp Street New Orleans 5, Louisiana	
Mississippi Economic Council P. O. Box 1849 Jackson 5, Mississippi	C
State Highway Department Information Division Highway Building Austin 14, Texas	A
Galveston Chamber of Commerce 2021 Market Street Galveston, Texas	

Port Lavaca Chamber of Commerce  
Port Lavaca, Texas

Coastal Bend Tourist Association  
P. O. Box 1147  
Corpus Christi, Texas

Brazoport Chamber of Commerce  
Brazoport, Texas

### The Pacific Coast States

Pacific Ocean fishing along America's 1,500 miles of dramatic coastline offers sport for a great array of species. Salmon is the top game fish, ranking with the finest sports fish in the world. Striped-bass fishing is famous along this coast and is considered tops in spots like San Francisco Bay and Coos Bay, Oregon. Southern California offers surf fishing for the elusive corbina or that monstrous tough fighter, the ling cod.

The high cliffs that extend almost the whole length of the Pacific Coast make access to the water difficult in many places, but for the boatman or surfer who surmounts this problem the fishing is excellent. Because the surf runs right into steep cliffs in many places, a special breed of surf fishing has been developed, called "rock fishing." For this, an angler uses regular surf equipment and climbs out on the rocks, casting his line around pot holes or between boulders, looking for the big ones that lurk there.

Skiffs and charter boats are available in the towns where there is even a remote possibility of landing a salmon. Party boats can be had from a whole list of towns; also, the Pacific Coast offers a boat unique in the party-boat line, called a live bait boat. This is no more than a large party boat that chums to draw the fish into the boat and then supplies fishermen with live bait. Another original method of fishing on the coast is from anchored offshore barges. Here you are ferried out to the barge, pay a small fee, fish, and are later ferried back to land.

The Pacific Coast is a vast area with a much smaller concentration of population than the Atlantic Coast and consequently

doesn't get the fishing pressure of the Atlantic. Salmon could not survive along our East Coast, but on the Pacific not only do they survive but also thrive. They alone could make this an excellent fishing area, but with all the other sports fish caught near the shore, salmon makes this coast truly great for sports fishing.

Species along these shore include:

*Barracuda*, *Pacific Barracuda*, are taken along the California coast and around Catalina Islands. They run to 12 pounds and are caught all year round, with best fishing in the summer, when they come close to shore.

*Cabazon* or *Sculpin* are ugly-looking fish, related to the Atlantic sea robin. The fish run to 25 pounds and the meat is a delicacy. They are taken near shore, over rocky bottoms along the whole coast, throughout the year.

*Corbina* are taken from the surf in the southern portions of California. A wary fish and is as easily spooked as a bonefish. Although the average fish weighs but 3 pounds they are considered a sportsman's prize.

*Yellowfin Croaker* are found all along California's coast and up into Washington with the best fishing in the southern portions of California. They are small fish weighing up to 5 pounds, but 2 pounds is the average size.

*Spotfin Croaker* are caught south of Point of Conception, California. These fish pull hard on a line and the angler must be careful not to rip their delicate mouths. They are caught near shore and are often taken by surf fishermen. They average 4 pounds but sometimes attain a weight of 11 pounds.

*Black Sea Bass* are Pacific Coast monsters averaging 50 pounds, but occasionally hitting 600 pounds. They are taken all year long from the rock bottoms of California's waters from San Francisco southward. They are often taken from jetties.

*White Sea Bass* are caught the entire length of the Coast the year round, but the best times for them are summer and fall. They are fished by trolling or still fishing. These fish average 5 to 25 pounds and some attain a weight of 70 pounds.

*Kelp Bass* are caught all year round, near kelp beds in waters

south of San Francisco. The fish are both top and bottom feeders and will sometimes run to 20 pounds.

*Striped Bass* have become top sports fish of the Pacific Coast. San Francisco Bay was first stocked in 1879 and fortunately these few fish multiplied along the rocky Pacific Coast faster than rabbits in Australia. Today, striper fishing in this area ranks with the best, particularly in the favorite spot—Coos Bay, Oregon.

*Halibut*. The Pacific halibut are sports fish taken both in off-shore and inshore waters of southern California. It is the biggest member of the flatfish group and like other flatfish it is a bottom feeder. Inshore fish run up to 25 pounds.

*Flounder, Starry Flounder*, of the Pacific is a popular fish ranging from Washington to the Point of Conception in California. Their average weight is 2 to 6 pounds, with some going to 20 pounds. They are taken all year.

*Ling Cod* are taken all year round all along our Pacific shores. These fish average 1 to 6 pounds, while some weigh as much as 70 pounds.

*Mackerel, Pacific Mackerel*, are relatively small fish averaging only a pound or two. They are taken the entire length of the coast but the best fishing for them is concentrated in an area stretching from Santa Barbara to San Diego. Fishing for them has dropped off in recent years.

*Priest Fish* are members of a group of fish numbering some sixty species that are known as rockfish. These fish are caught the entire length of the Pacific Coast, from the surf or by still fishing. They seldom weigh more than 5 pounds.

*King Salmon, Tyee, or Spring Salmon* are the biggest sports-fishing prizes of the Pacific Coast. The fish go up to 5 feet in length and up to 70 pounds in weight, and are rumored to reach 100 pounds on rare occasions. There are two runs of kings each year—in the spring and fall. Each year they bring fishermen from all over the country to the Pacific waters north of Monterey, California.

*Pink or Humpback Salmon* are named for the hump the male develops on his back before spawning. They average 5 to 7 pounds and are found almost the entire length of the Pacific Coast.

*Silver Salmon or Cohoe* run in the fall and early winter. The silver is a wonderful light-tackle sports fish because he is a savage striker and hard fighter. Pudget Sound is famous for them in September and they are taken anywhere on the Coast north of Monterrey. They average 5 to 8 pounds.

*Sockeye or Red Salmon* cover the same area of the Pacific as do the silvers. The male develops a curious hooked mouth and turns red at breeding time. These fish average 5 or 6 pounds.

*Dog Salmon or Chum* are not a popular sports fish because they do not take the hook readily. They range the Pacific from San Francisco north and some of the species may attain a weight of 30 pounds.

*Steelhead* are seagoing rainbow trout that are often thought to be salmon. The season begins after the fall rains of Oregon start and the best fishing is from December to February. The fish are caught in Washington, Oregon, and northern California, and are taken in salt water by trolling.

*Sheepshead, Pacific Sheepshead* are ugly creatures who belong to the wrasse family of fish. They run only in the southern portion of California and sometimes attain a weight of 30 pounds. Another name for them is California redfish.

*Yellowtail, Pacific Yellowtail* are taken from the Point of Conception south all year long, with best fishing in spring and summer. These mackerel-shaped fish may weigh up to 40 pounds.

The thousand-mile coastline of California offers temperate and subtropical fishing. Salmon run as far south as Monterrey except San Francisco Bay, which seems to be avoided by silvers. Ling cod up to 70 pounds are caught along these shores and corbina up to 25 pounds are taken from the surf. The northern portion of the state show cabezon, ling cod, starry flounder, stripers, rockfish, and surf perch, while farther south there are sculpin, cabezon, sheepshead, yellowtail, kelp bass, and rockfish.

The towns of Noyo, Eureka, Trinidad, and Crescent City of northern California are the salmon-fishing centers of the state. The town's sizable party- and charter-boat fleets as well as the skiffs are all geared to take salmon. The town of Eureka has a

pier for fishing. The best fishing in northern California is from June to September. This is the area of the state where the best steelhead fishing takes place.

San Francisco has a large fleet of party and charter boats that serve the city. Skiffs are also available. San Francisco Bay offers excellent striped bass fishing from such places as famous Arch Rock, located halfway between San Francisco and Alcatraz Island. Other fishing is done at San Pablo Bay and in the ocean. Fish taken in the area are ling cod, starry flounder, rockfish, and cabezon. There is good surf casting for stripers.

Monterey has party boats and charter boats for fishing for striped bass, rockfish, salmon, ling cod, and cabezon. It has three fishing piers for sportsmen as well as a supply of skiffs. Best fishing in the area is during late winter, spring, and summer.

Santa Barbara offers charter-boat, party-boat and live-bait-boat fishing as well as pier fishing. The best time for fishing here is in the spring and summer. Fish taken include barracuda, white sea bass, halibut, kelp bass, and mackerel. Santa Barbara is only 80 miles southeast of Point of Conception, California, which is generally considered the dividing line between cold- and warm-water species of fish on the Coast.

Los Angeles is served by fishing fleets from Santa Monica Bay, the towns of Redondo Beach, Ocean Park, Santa Monica, and Malibu, as well as Long Beach, Wilmington, and San Pedro. There are party boats, charter boats and live-bait boats out of this area. Offshore barges are available for fishermen as well as skiffs in the Long Beach, Wilmington, and San Pedro areas, while pier fishing is good at Santa Monica and Ocean Park. Fish taken include barracuda, yellowtail, white sea bass, black sea bass, kelp bass, halibut, and mackerel.

Santa Catalina Island and its sister islands, San Clemente and San Nicholas, are among the most famous fishing islands of the world. Boats that fish here come from the mainland or leave Santa Catalina. The island boasts one of the nation's biggest private fleets and much big-game fishing is done here. The best times for fishing are the spring and summer.

Newport and Balboa offer charter-boat, party-boat and live-bait-



boat fishing as well as offshore barge fishing, pier fishing, and surf fishing. Spring and summer are the best times for the runs of barracuda, white sea bass, kelp bass, halibut, mackerel, corbina, spotfin, and yellowfin croaker.

Oceanside offers charter boats, party boats, live-bait boats, barges, pier fishing, and surf fishing. Fish and seasons are the same as for Newport.

San Diego has one of the biggest charter-boat fleets of the Pacific. Most of the charters are for big-game fish in the Coronado Islands of Mexico; however, boats may be rented for excellent local fishing. Party boats and offshore barges can be hired. The best fishing is in the spring and summer for yellowtail, white sea bass, kelp bass, halibut, black sea bass, barracuda, corbina, and spotfin and yellowfin croakers.

Oregon fishing is geared for salmon, and when they run there is such a clamor that it is sometimes difficult to get boats, accommodations, or anything else. A big run of tyee creates such excitement that everything else is all but forgotten. But not to be overlooked is the excellent striper fishing and good bottom fishing along this coast. Then too, Oregon is the top steelhead state in the country.

Pacific City on the Nestucca River is one of the best silver salmon areas of the coast. Guides, skiffs and charter boats are available during the season, which starts in September.

Depoe Bay has many fishing boats available for salmon, red snapper, striped bass, or cod.

Waldport on the Alsea River has guides, skiffs and charter boats for the salmon runs. The season's height for silvers is August and September. Cutthroat trout are taken from July to November.

The town of Winchester, on Winchester Bay, has excellent accommodations for fishermen. Charter boats, skiffs, and guides can be rented for both bay and sea fishing. Silver and king salmon are taken in July and September, respectively.

Coos Bay, Charleston, and Empire offer good accommodations. Facilities include charter boats, skiffs and guides. Silver and king salmon run from July to September; however, fishing for them here

is not the best in the state. From July to October, Coos Bay offers the best striped bass fishing on the Pacific Coast.

Gold Beach is located by the world-famous steelhead- and salmon-filled Rogue River. King salmon enter the river in April and stay until June, while the silver salmon are there from September to December. Steelhead fishing is best from December to January. Gold Beach offers accommodations in charter boats, skiffs, guides, and hotels.

The state of Washington, like Oregon, is devoted to its salmon fishing. Puget Sound has probably the best silver salmon fishing in the world; every September its waters are thick with these silvery fighters. King derbies giving sizable prizes are annual affairs in Puget Sound. Striped bass and good bottom fishing round out the fishing picture on this beautiful body of water.

Puget Sound's 1,000 miles of coastline has on its perimeter the cities of Seattle, Tacoma, Bellingham, and Port Angeles. Here there are guides, charter boats, and skiffs as well as excellent surf fishing. It is interesting to note that in many of the smaller towns on Puget Sound the commercial fishermen rent their boats out and act as guides for anyone wanting to go after the summer and fall salmon.

Grey's Harbor takes in the towns of Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and Westport. Westport is the best known and is a world-famous salmon-fishing center. Charter boats, skiffs, and guides are plentiful throughout Grey's Harbor. The rugged terrain makes this area excellent for surf fishing.

Willapa Bay offers charter boats and skiffs at South Bend and many of the other small towns that surround the bay. Salmon fishing is the keynote of the area.

Other specific information from:

*Rated*

California State Chamber of Commerce  
350 Bush Street  
San Francisco 4, California

**B**

All-Year Club of Southern California  
628 West Sixth Street  
Los Angeles 17, California

#### 44 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

Californians Inc.

703 Market Street

San Francisco 3, California

Oregon State Game Commission

A

1634 S.W. Alder Street

Portland 8, Oregon

Oregon Coast Association

P.O. Box 1266

Newport, Oregon

State Advertising Commission

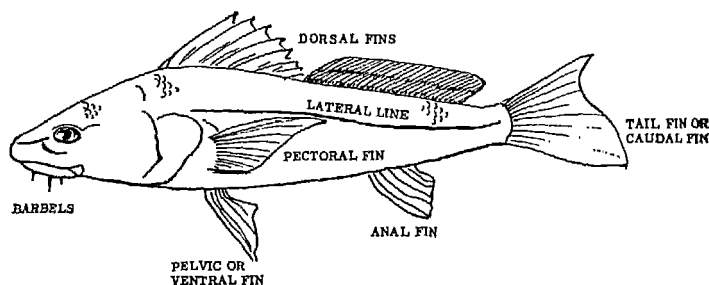
C

Olympia, Washington

## **Part II**

### ***Fundamentals on Popular Coastal Fish***





*Parts of a fish.*

<i>Popular name:</i>	Amberjack
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Seriola dumerili</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Coronado, amberfish, great jack
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 120 pounds. Average 15 to 30 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A silvery-bluish fish that has a horizontal yellow stripe extending almost the length of the body. Another blackish stripe runs from dorsal fin across eye and to the mouth
<i>Area of activity:</i>	The Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Coast as far north as the Carolinas. Found most abundantly in southern Florida and Texas
<i>Baits:</i>	Pinfish, live mullet, jigs, spoons, weighted lures
<i>How fished:</i>	Trolling or still fishing on reefs
<i>Tackle:</i>	Rods with 9-to-12-ounce tips, reels 4/0
<i>Rig: Line</i>	30-lb. test monofilament
<i>Hooks</i>	Leader, wire 5/0 to 8/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good
<i>Comments:</i>	A hard striker and fierce fighter, an excellent sports fish.

<i>Popular name:</i>	Barracuda
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Sphyræna barracuda</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Great barracuda, common barracuda, picuda, sea tiger, cuda
<i>Size:</i>	Average 5 to 25 pounds and some attain a weight of 100 pounds

# 48 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

<i>Description:</i>	A long pike with a large mouth full of many very sharp teeth. Fish is a green color on the back and white on the sides and underneath
<i>Area of activity:</i>	The Florida Coast and the Gulf of Mexico
<i>Baits:</i>	Mullet or other small fish, large spoons or plugs
<i>How fished:</i>	Caught by trolling in the Gulf Stream or anywhere off the coast. It is also taken while still fishing on the reefs. Smaller specimens come into the bays and are taken in inlets, bays, and channels
<i>Tackle:</i>	Heavy-duty tackle for the large ones with at least a 4-to-9-ounce tip. Bay or spinning equipment of medium strength for inshore specimens
<i>Rig: Line</i>	6 to 24 thread <i>Leader</i> , stainless steel
<i>Hooks</i>	4/0 to 10/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Edible
<i>Comments:</i>	These are savage fish that strike with vehemence. They are hard, tricky fighters and are said to attack anything that swims. Barracuda have not been known to attack persons wading on the flats, although they often scare them when they follow a person across the flats.

\* \* \*

<i>Popular name:</i>	Bass, Kelp
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Paralabrax clathratus</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Rock bass, sand bass, black bass, kelp salmon, cabrilla
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 24 inches, weighing 20 pounds. Average 1 to 5 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Mottled sides, gray or brown top with silver-gray sides
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Pacific Coast, much more abundant south of Point of Conception
<i>Baits:</i>	Clams, squid, anchovies, queenfish, and other bait fish
<i>How fished:</i>	Still fishing near kelp beds. Fished from piers and barges—live bait fishing best
<i>Tackle:</i>	Bay rod, medium spinning rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5- to 15-lb. test <i>Leader</i> , nylon and wire
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 3 to 1/0

*Edibility:* Excellent  
*Comments:* An important Pacific Coast Game fish that is now protected by California game laws for reasons of conservation.

*Popular name:* Bass, Sea  
*Latin name:* *Centropristes striatus*  
*Other names:* Common sea bass, rock bass, blackfish, rump-back, or black will  
*Size:* 1 to 2 pounds is average but some are 8 pounds  
*Description:* A black colored fish with pale longitudinal streaks. The fish has a large black spot on the last dorsal spines  
*Area of activity:* Massachusetts to Florida  
*Baits:* Cut live shrimp, clams, crabs and other crustacea  
*How fished:* Bottom fished  
*Tackle:* For the big offshore species use a 6-to-9-ounce tip rod, while for the bay species a bait-casting or bay rod will do  
*Rig: Line* 6 to 9 thread *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* 2/0 to 5/0  
*Edibility:* Excellent  
*Comments:* The fish is known for its readiness to take a hook and hundreds can be taken in one day if the right spot is found. Extensively taken from Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras.

*Popular name:* Bass, Black Sea (California)  
*Latin name:* *Stereolepis gigas*  
*Other names:* California Sea Bass, Jewfish, Black Rockfish  
*Size:* Monsters, run up to 600 pounds, average 50 pounds. Sometimes over 7 feet in size.  
*Description:* Color dark brown to black. Long dorsal fin with dorsal spines longer than dorsal rays. Young fish deep red with dark spots.  
*Area of activity:* California sometimes as far North as San Francisco.



## 50 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

<i>Baits:</i>	Live or dead fish weighing up to six pounds. Barracuda or mackerel or other fish.
<i>How fished:</i>	Caught over rocky bottoms or near kelp beds while bottom fishing. Also taken near jetties and from banks near shore.
<i>Tackle:</i>	Rods with 16 ounce rod tips, 6/0 to 9/0 reels.
<i>Rig: Line</i>	36 thread <i>Leader</i> 1/32 inch chain
<i>Hooks</i>	6/0 to 14/0 hook
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good eating, cut into steaks.
<i>Comments:</i>	This monster is a slow starter when hooked and the work starts when the reeling begins for it is a real tug of war. Fish must be pumped.

<i>Popular name:</i>	Bass, Sea (White)
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Cynoscion nobilis</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Sea trout, California white sea bass, white croaker, weakfish
<i>Size:</i>	Fish are taken weighing 5 to 25 pounds and sometimes attains a weight of 70 pounds. Can be up to 4 feet in length
<i>Description:</i>	Blue-gray in color, shading to a silvery or copper topside. Dorsal and anal fins are scaleless
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Entire Pacific Coast but is uncommon north of San Francisco
<i>Baits:</i>	Shrimp, squid, sardines, smelts, spoons, or feathered jigs
<i>How fished:</i>	Still fishing near kelp beds, trolling or taken from surf
<i>Tackle:</i>	Boat rod or medium spinning rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	6- to 15-thread or mono. 10- to 25-lb. test.
	<i>Leader</i> , stainless steel
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 1 to 2/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Excellent
<i>Comments:</i>	Puts up a dramatic surf fight and often runs to tangle angler in kelp beds. Be very careful of soft mouth when fighting this fish. Best times are from April to September.

<i>Popular name:</i>	Bass, Striped
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Roccus saxatilis</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Striper, rockfish, rock Bass, greenhead
<i>Size:</i>	Average 2 to 25 pounds in weight and can go over 100 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Black stripes running the length of the body. Lower jaws projects a short way beyond upper jaw. It is a greenish-silver color
<i>Area of activity:</i>	The Atlantic Coast, the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Coast
<i>Baits:</i>	Eels, Sand eels, Menhaden, Mullet, Herring, Sardines, Clams, Seaworms, Squid, Spoons, Plugs and Eel rigs
<i>How fished:</i>	Surf casting or trolling from a boat. Best fished at night when the fish feed
<i>Tackle:</i>	Surf-casting rod, spinning rod, or other heavy duty salt-water equipment
<i>Rig: Line</i>	9 to 18 thread <i>Leader</i> , stainless steel
<i>Hooks</i>	1/0 to 4/0 for smaller bay and river stripers, 5/0 to 8/0 for surf stripers
<i>Edibility:</i>	Excellent
<i>Comments:</i>	A savage striker and a hard fighter that will take practically any bait or lure, the striper is America's most popular surf fish.

<i>Popular name:</i>	Blackfish
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Tautoga onitis</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Tautog, oysterfish, chub
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 21 pounds, and 3 feet in length. Average catches weigh up to 10 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Blackish, with dark irregular spots and light underneath. Two sets of conical teeth
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Maine to Florida
<i>Baits:</i>	Sea worms, fiddler crabs, shrimp, clams or mussels
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fishing. Still fishing from a boat and in some instances surf casting
<i>Tackle:</i>	3/6 rod, bay rod

## 52 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

**Rig:** *Line* 6-thread line *Leader*, nylon  
*Hooks* 1/0 to 4/0 for bay fish; 4/0 to 8/0 for big ones  
**Edibility:** Excellent  
**Comments:** Fish are found in rocky places and on the bottom, consequently angler must expect to lose rigs.

**Popular name:** Bluefish  
**Latin name:** *Pomatomus saltatrix*  
**Other names:** Skipjack, snapper (under 1 pound) tailor greenfish, skip, mackerel  
**Size:** Up to 25 pounds; average 1 to 5 pounds  
**Description:** A streamlined fish with a forked tail fin and a greenish-blue back with bluish silvery sides. Pectoral fin is blackish at base. Has very sharp teeth in lower jaw  
**Area of activity:** Migratory from Massachusetts to Florida and throughout the Gulf of Mexico  
**Baits:** Any small bait fish, shrimp spoons, metal squids, or plugs  
**How fished:** Trolling, still fishing from a boat, or by surf casting  
**Tackle:** Medium surf rod or 5- to 5-foot boat rod  
**Rig:** *Line* 9 to 18 thread 12- to 20-test mono. *Leader*, Wire, No. 7 to 9  
*Hooks* 1/0 to 2/0 for bay blues, 4/0 to 7/0 for big ones  
**Edibility:** Excellent  
**Comments:** An excellent game fish that provides fast action for the angler. Fish travel in dense schools.

**Popular name:** Bonefish  
**Latin name:** *Albula vulpes*  
**Other names:** Macabi, banana fish, big-eye herring, sanducha  
**Size:** Up to 20 pounds, 2 to 5 pounds average  
**Description:** Extremely small mouth and a receding lower jaw. Bright silvery sides and white underneath  
**Area of activity:** Southern Florida and Texas, sometimes as far north as the Carolinas



*Baits:* Crustacea, mollusk, hermit crab and sand fleas, flies  
*How fished:* Fished by wading and poling the flats  
*Tackle:* Fly rod  
*Rig: Line* 6 to 9 thread 5- to 15-lb. test mono. *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* 1/0 to 4/0  
*Edibility:* Poor; not generally eaten  
*Comments:* One of the top sports fish of the world and is known for its wild, hard first run. They are an extremely wary fish when on the flats.

*Popular name:* Bonito, Atlantic  
*Latin name:* *Sarda sarda*  
*Other names:* Common bonito, bonito, skipjack, bonejack.  
*Size:* Up to 25 pounds, average 3 to 6 pounds  
*Description:* A small tuna with dark lines that move diagonally upward. The fish has silvery sides and an oceanic blue back  
*Area of activity:* Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean North to Cape Cod  
*Baits:* Bait Fish, spoons, feathered jigs  
*How fished:* Trolling with jigs, plugs, and spoons  
*Tackle:* Glass rods 6 to 8 ounces, reels measuring about 5/0  
*Rig: Line* 12 to 20 lb. mono *Leader,* wire  
*Hooks* 4/0 to 8/0  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* When a fish is hooked, keep it on the line, for it will attract other fish of the school.

*Popular name:* Bonito, Oceanic  
*Latin name:* *Katsuwonus vagans*  
*Other names:* Artic bonito, skipjack, striped tuna, bonito  
*Size:* Up to 39 pounds, average 3 to 5 pounds  
*Description:* A small tuna with striped lines that run from pectoral fin to the tail. The fish is oceanic blue color.

## 54 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

*Area of activity:* Middle Atlantic States to Florida in the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico  
*Baits:* Spoons, feathered jigs, and bait fish  
*How fished:* Trolling with jigs, plugs or spoons  
*Tackle:* Glass rods weighing 6 to 8 ounces  
*Rig: Line* 20 lb. test mono. *Leader, wire—No. 7*  
               *Hooks* 6/0 to 8/0  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* Fish are mostly caught trolling and often trail a boat's wake. Fish is taken in all the warm waters of the world. The name Artic bonito is a misnomer.

*Popular name:* Bonito, Pacific  
*Latin name:* *Sarda lineolata*  
*Other names:* California bonito, ocean bonito, skipjack  
*Size:* Up to 40 inches in length; 25 pounds  
*Description:* A streamlined fish. Has a metallic color and six to eight stripes on back  
*Area of activity:* Pacific Coast with the best fishing south of Point of Conception, California  
*Baits:* Sardine, anchovies, and spoons  
*How fished:* Live-bait boats, or trolling  
*Tackle:* Medium spinning rod  
*Rig: Line* 15-lb. test mono. *Leader, wire*  
               *Hooks* 2/0 to 6/0  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* Occasionally schools of bonito come close to shore; they are usually smaller ones.

*Popular name:* Cabezon  
*Latin name:* *Scorpaenopsis marmoratus*  
*Other names:* mottled sculpin, blue cod, bullhead  
*Size:* Up to 30 inches and 25 pounds  
*Description:* An ugly fish, scaleless, wrinkled body and generally reddish in color  
*Area of activity:* Washington, Oregon, and California  
*Baits:* Clams, mussels, squid bait fish, or strip-cut fish

<i>How fished:</i>	Fished in shallow water and around kelp beds
<i>Tackle:</i>	Boat rod or a light surf rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	10- to 20-lb. mono. <i>Leader, wire</i>
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 4 to 2/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Excellent, considered a delicacy. WARNING: Roe of cabezon is <i>poisonous!</i>
<i>Comments:</i>	This fish is a real prize. It is a relative of the East Coast sea robin.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Chilipepper
<i>Latin name:</i>	Sebastes goodei
<i>Other names:</i>	Rockfish, red rock cod
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 22 inches in length. Two to 8 pounds is the average weight
<i>Description:</i>	Distinguished by a pink stripe extending length of lateral line. Has pinkish-red back. No strong spines on top of head
<i>Area of activity:</i>	California Coast. More abundant south of Point of Conception, California
<i>Baits:</i>	Strip cut fish
<i>How fished:</i>	Deep water fishing over rocks. In Southern sections the fish comes into shallower water
<i>Tackle:</i>	Heavy duty, short deepwater rods
<i>Rig: Line</i>	36-lb. test <i>Leader, nylon</i>
<i>Hooks</i>	6/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good
<i>Comments:</i>	Fish taken when going for other deep-water species. Important in southern California.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Cobia
<i>Latin name:</i>	Rachycentron canadus
<i>Other names:</i>	Cobio, ling, lemonfish, coalfish, crabeater, ser- geant fish, black salmon
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 100 pounds, average 15 to 20 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A long fish, dark brown and white underneath. A dark band runs from eye to tail
<i>Area of activity:</i>	The Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean north to Chesapeake Bay

## 56 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

<i>Baits:</i>	Bait fish, squid, crab, shrimp, spoons, plugs and jigs
<i>How fished:</i>	Caught by still fishing or casting
<i>Tackle:</i>	Medium spinning or boat rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	9 to 18 thread line. <i>Leader</i> , wire or heavy nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	1/0 to 7/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good
<i>Comments:</i>	Cobia like to get under things. Fish under a buoy, a boat, or a floating object. The cobia is a relative of the cod and may be taken both by bottom and top fishing.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Cod, Atlantic
<i>Latin name:</i>	Gadus callarias
<i>Other names:</i>	Atlantic cod, rock cod, common cod, grouper
<i>Size:</i>	Record caught by rod and reel is 57 pounds. Average fish weigh 5 to 20 pounds. Fish said to attain a weight of 200 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Fish vary in color and may be brownish, yellowish reddish, or greenish. Are spotted and have a pale lateral line. Barbel on lower jaw
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Maine to New Jersey
<i>Baits:</i>	Strip-cut fish, clams, squid, crabs, worms
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fishing from boats
<i>Tackle:</i>	Short, heavy-duty boat rods
<i>Rig: Line</i>	Up to 36-lb. test. <i>Leader</i> , nylon or gut
<i>Hooks</i>	5/0 to 9/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Excellent
<i>Comments:</i>	Taken near shore north of Cape Cod; also offshore. A rough fish that can be struck hard. Walk baits.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Cod, Pacific
<i>Latin name:</i>	Gadus macrocephalus
<i>Other names:</i>	Cod, Alaska cod, Gray cod
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 3½ feet

*Description:* Has long barbel on end of lower jaw. Small spots on back and sides. Fish is a brownish or grayish color on back and light underneath

*Area of activity:* Washington and Oregon and up to Alaska

*Baits:* Herring, strip-cut fish, or crustaceans

*How fished:* Bottom fishing

*Tackle:* Sturdy, short boat rods

*Rig: Line* 20-lb. test mono. *Leader,* nylon

*Hooks* 2/0 to 5/0

*Edibility:* Good

*Comments:* Fish usually are taken in deep water. However, during summer months they come close to shore and pier; dock and jetty fishermen get them regularly.

*Popular name:* Corbina

*Latin name:* *Menticirrhus undulatus*

*Other names:* California corbina, corvina, bagre, whiting

*Size:* Up to 30 inches and 8 pounds; average 3 pounds

*Description:* Dark gray with a bluish topside. Wavy lines running to fins on topside. Has a short barbel at point of lower jaw

*Area of activity:* California, Point of Conception, southward

*Baits:* Sand crabs, clams, or marine worms—no lures

*How fished:* Best fishing from surf at night during the summer months

*Tackle:* Spinning tackle or any light tackle

*Rig: Line* 5-lb. mono. *Leader,* Nylon

*Hooks* 4/0 to No. 2, usually No. 1 or No. 2

*Edibility:* Good

*Comments:* A fish as easily spooked as a bonefish. The fish at times refuses all baits while at other times hits almost anything. They often travel in groups or loosely formed schools.

*Popular name:* Croaker, Atlantic

*Latin name:* *Micropogon undulatus*

*Other names:* Texas croaker, golden croaker, roncadina, chut, corvina, hardhead, crocus



*Size:* Up to 5 pounds, average  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 pound  
*Description:* A croaker with brassy silver topside and a more whitish bottom side. A series of dark bars on back. Small barbels on bottom of lower jaw  
*Area of activity:* The Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic as far north as Cape Cod  
*Baits:* Cut crabs, clams, shrimp or minnows  
*How fished:* Bottom fished by still fishing or surf casting  
*Tackle:* Light surf Rod, bait casting, or light spinning rod  
*Rig: Line* 5-lb. test mono. *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* No. 1 to 3/0  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* This fish is often considered a pest or at best a panfish.

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*Popular name:* Croaker, Spotfin  
*Latin name:* Roncador stearnsi  
*Other names:* Pacific croaker, golden croaker, black croaker, spot  
*Size:* Up to 26 inches and 10 pounds in weight  
*Description:* Gray-bluish color. Dark oblique lines on side, moving back and up. Identified by black spot on base of pectoral fins  
*Area of activity:* Pacific Coast, south of Point of Conception  
*Baits:* Clams, mussels, pile worms, sand worms, or shrimp  
*How fished:* Surf fished or still fished on bottom  
*Tackle:* Any standard light surf rod or boat rod  
*Rig: Line* 5-20 lb. mono. *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* No. 1 to No. 4  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* Spotfins are usually caught in water less than 30 feet deep. Fish have tendency to stay in croaker holes just beyond the breaker lines in the surf. Late summer is best fishing time. They move offshore in winter.

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*Popular name:* Croaker, Tommy  
*Latin name:* Genyonemus lineatus

<i>Other names:</i>	Tommy cod, herring, kingfish, white croaker
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 1 foot and 2½ pounds in weight
<i>Description:</i>	Silvery with a brassy color. Black spot on upper base of pectoral fin
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Pacific Coast
<i>Baits:</i>	Strip cut fish, clams, or shrimp
<i>How fished:</i>	Pier fishing and other methods of still fishing
<i>Tackle:</i>	Light
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5-lb. mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 1 to No. 3
<i>Edibility:</i>	Edible
<i>Comments:</i>	Makes good bait for bigger fish. A favorite pan-fish with pier fishermen.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Croaker, Yellowfin
<i>Latin name:</i>	Umbrina roncadior
<i>Other names:</i>	Yellowtail, croaker, roncadior, golden croaker
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 16 inches and on rare occasions approaches 5 pounds. Average fish are 1 to 2 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Bright silvery with yellow overton and yellowish fins. Has a small barbel at point of lower jaw
<i>Area of activity:</i>	California Coast, best fishing South of Point of Conception
<i>Baits:</i>	Anchovies, live or cut, clams, crabs or marine worms
<i>How fished:</i>	Surf fishing or still fishing on the bottom. Best fishing in shallow water, near sandy shorelines and in sloughs or troughs
<i>Tackle:</i>	Light surf or bay rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5-20-lb. mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 1 to No. 4
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good
<i>Comments:</i>	A small fish but a good sports fish. Best fishing is during the summer months.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Drum
<i>Latin name:</i>	Sciaenops ocellatus

## 60 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

*Other names:* Channel Bass, Red Drum, Puppy Drum  
*Size:* Up to 100 pounds  
*Description:* Has black spot on base of tail fin  
*Area of activity:* Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic North to New Jersey  
*How fished:* Surf casting from beaches or fished from piers, bridges or docks. Also trolling.  
*Tackle:* Surfcasting rod or heavy duty spinning rod  
*Rig: Line* 6 to 18 thread *Leader,* wire  
*Hooks* 5/0 to 8/0  
*Edibility:* Excellent  
*Comments:* An excellent sportsfish.

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*Popular name:* Drum, Black  
*Latin name:* *Pogonias cromis*  
*Other names:* Drum, drumfish, barbed drum, big drum, sea drum, gray drum, striped drum  
*Size:* Up to 140 pounds; average fish much smaller, usually under 10 pounds  
*Description:* Dark vertical bars against a gray body; has barbels on lower jaw  
*Area of activity:* New York to Florida and in the Gulf of Mexico  
*Baits:* Clams, crabs, and shrimp  
*How fished:* Still fishing over grassy bottoms, in the shallows, especially good around bridges and pilings  
*Tackle:* Medium-action boat rod, 5 to 6 foot  
*Rig: Line* 15-20 twist *Leader,* heavy nylon  
*Hooks* 1/0 to 3/0 for small ones, 4/0 to 9/0 for big ones  
*Edibility:* Good but large ones tend to be wormy  
*Comments:* A hard-fighting fish that likes to put his weight behind dives.

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*Popular name:* Eel  
*Latin name:* *Anguilla rostrata*  
*Other names:* Atlantic eel, common eel, sand eel, elvers

<i>Size:</i>	Up to 6 feet in length and 8 pounds, common up to 5 feet and 5 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Mature specimens are almost black, whereas young ones are almost transparent. A snake-like fish
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Entire Atlantic Coast and most of the Gulf of Mexico
<i>Baits:</i>	Sea worms, dead fish
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fished exclusively
<i>Tackle:</i>	Sturdy light rod or hand line
<i>Rig: Line</i>	6 to 9 thread <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 6 to 1/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good
<i>Comments:</i>	A slippery fish that can tangle lines after it gets into the boat. Have a rag handy so the fish can be gripped. Females live in fresh water while males live in brackish waters.

<i>Popular name:</i>	Flounder, Southern
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Paralichthys lethostigma</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Southern fluke, mud flounder
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 25 pounds. Average size 1 or 2 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A flatfish. Colors are mottled on topside and vary dark brown to light brown
<i>Area of activity:</i>	In the Atlantic from Cape Hatteras south and throughout the Gulf of Mexico
<i>Baits:</i>	Crustacea shrimp, worms, and clams
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fished in bays and offshore in winter; fish are in close during the warmer months
<i>Tackle:</i>	Light bay rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5-10-lb. mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon or gut
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 4 to 2/0 hook
<i>Edibility:</i>	Excellent
<i>Comments:</i>	These fish are taken by gigging when they come into very shallow water during the warm months. They are gigged at night.

<i>Popular name:</i>	Flounder, Starry
<i>Latin name:</i>	Platichthys stellatus
<i>Other names:</i>	Pacific flounder, great flounder, calf flounder
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 3 feet and 20 pounds in weight. Average fish 2 to 6 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A flatfish. Dorsal fins have alternating orange and black stripes
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Pacific Coast as far south as Point of Conception, California
<i>Baits:</i>	Worms, crustaceans, small bait fish
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fishing, keep bait moving on the bottom
<i>Tackle:</i>	Boat rod for bottom fishing
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5-10-lb. mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 4 to 2/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Excellent
<i>Comments:</i>	A typical flounder caught by the typical flounder fishing methods. Caught over all types of bottoms except rocky ones. Many are taken right near shore during the winter, when they spawn. Taken all year at mouths of streams and in the bays; a common fish.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Flounder, Winter
<i>Latin name:</i>	Pseudopleuronectes americanus
<i>Other names:</i>	Flounder, flatfish
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 5 pounds. Most weigh under 2 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A flatfish, brown on topside with several dark spots. Undereath is white
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Maine to Middle Atlantic States
<i>Baits:</i>	Sand worms, sea worms, and clams
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fished in bays over sandy or clean mud bottoms
<i>Tackle:</i>	Light boat rods or any other light rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5-lb. test mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 2 to No. 8
<i>Edibility:</i>	Excellent
<i>Comments:</i>	Sporty fish for their size and lots of fun to catch. Best fishing in spring and fall.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Fluke
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Paralichthys dentatus</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Summer flounder, northern flounder, summer fluke
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 25 pounds, usually 2 to 5 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A flatfish. Has a large mouth, with fully developed teeth. Fish sometimes has green spots
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Cape Cod south to North Carolina. A few may get as far south as northern Florida
<i>Baits:</i>	Squid strips, killie, crab, clams, lures, and metal squids
<i>How fished:</i>	Still fishing on the bottom by drifting or by being anchored
<i>Tackle:</i>	Light bay rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	6 to 9 thread 5-10-lb.-test mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon or gut
<i>Hooks</i>	1/0 to 5/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Excellent
<i>Comments:</i>	One of the most popular inshore fish with north-eastern fishermen. Fish are hard fighters.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Greenling, Kelp
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Hexagrammos decagrammus</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Greenling sea trout, kelp trout, kelp cod
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 20 inches
<i>Description:</i>	Brown or grayish in color. Males are covered with blotches of blue and brown. Females have many small spots, reddish, that give them the sea trout name. Fish have five lateral lines
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Pacific Coast south to Los Angeles. Abundant in northern waters
<i>Baits:</i>	Strip-cut fish, shrimp, sea worms, and crustaceans
<i>How fished:</i>	Rock fishing
<i>Tackle:</i>	Medium Surf Rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	12- to 15-lb. mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 2 to 4
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good; bones are sometimes green

*Comments:* Considered top sports fish of greenling group. The fish is popular with Oregon and Washington rock fishermen. California fishermen have a habit of referring to the fish as sea trout.

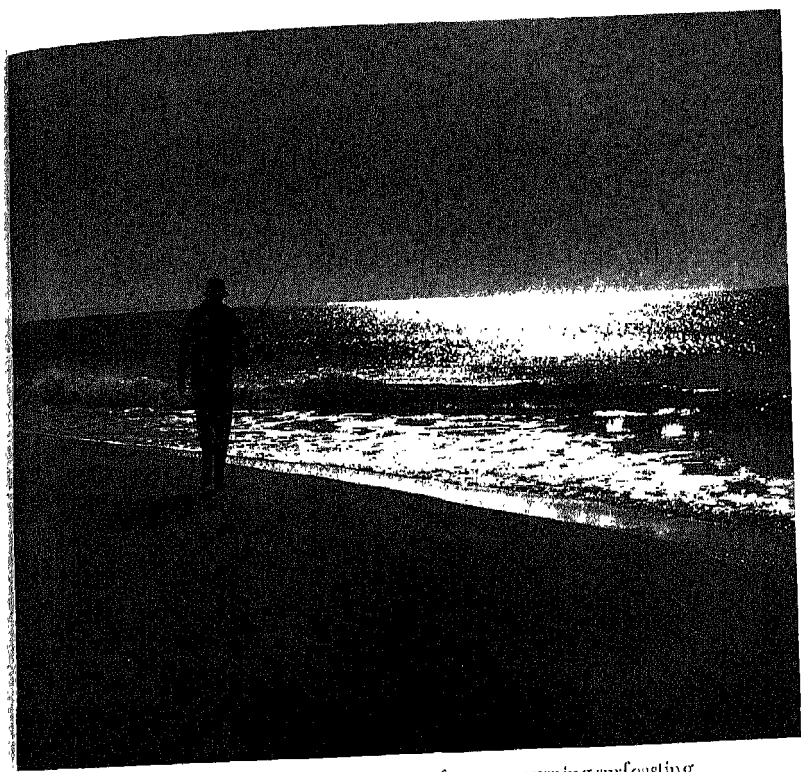
\* \* \*

*Popular name:* Greenling, Rock  
*Latin name:* Hexagrammos superciliosus  
*Other names:* Fringed greenling, Pacific rock trout, kelp cod  
*Size:* Up to 2 feet  
*Description:* Many colors, from red, brown to green. Is spotted. Has red and green caudal fin  
*Area of activity:* Pacific Coast as far south as Point of Conception  
*Baits:* Crustaceans, clams, or strip-cut fish  
*How fished:* Rock fishing or fishing from small boat  
*Tackle:* Medium surf rod  
*Rig: Line* 15-lb. mono. *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* No. 2 to 4  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* To induce fish to take the hook, keep lifting the bait off the bottom in a steady motion.

\* \* \*

*Popular name:* Greenling, Whitespotted  
*Latin name:* Hexagrammos stelleri  
*Other names:* Tommy cod, sea trout, greenling  
*Size:* Up to 2 feet  
*Description:* Has many small white spots over slender body  
*Area of activity:* Pacific Coast south to about the middle of California. Abundant in northern waters  
*Baits:* Crustaceans, clams, shrimp, and strip-cut fish  
*How fished:* Rockfishing or boat fishing around kelp beds  
*Tackle:* Medium surf rod  
*Rig: Line* 12-15-lb. mono. *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* No. 2 to 4  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* This fish likes fast-moving currents and is usually taken wherever the water is in motion.

\* \* \*



The author walks toward the quiet sea for some evening surfcasting.

*Photo Sam Mooradian*





The author demonstrates surfcasting. The cast begins with the rod far back over the angler's right shoulder. Bring rod from horizontal position over head in a smooth motion while releasing finger which holds line. The angler should take advantage of the distance gained by utilizing the full whip of the rod in the cast.

*Photo Sam Mooradian*



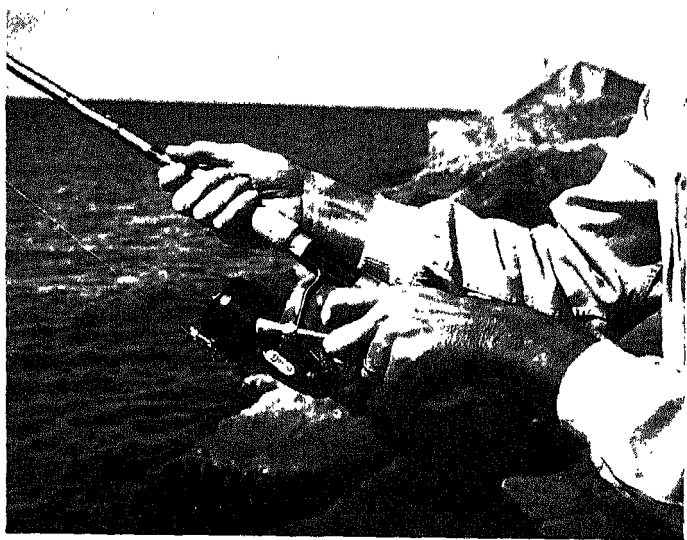
The follow-through brings the body and arms of the angler forward in the direction of the cast.

*Photo Sam Mooradian*



The retrieve depends on what baits and lures are being used and which fish are being caught.

*Photo Sam Mooradian*



This is the proper method for holding a spinning rod and reel.

*Photo Sam Mooradian*



It is always advisable to have a pair of pliers handy to remove hooks from fish. Pictured is a 14-pound amberjack.

*Photo Sam Mooradian*



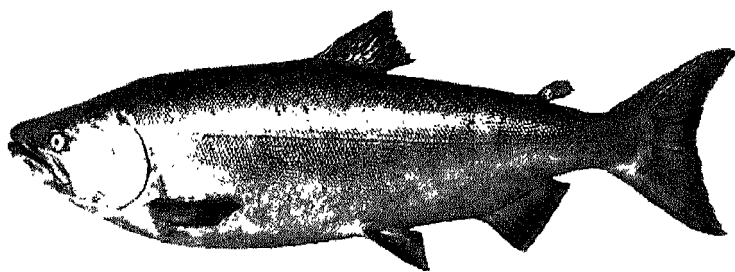
Here is a fine catch being cleaned at the dock. Fish which are cleaned within a few hours after being caught retain their flavor much longer.

*Photo Sam Mooradian*



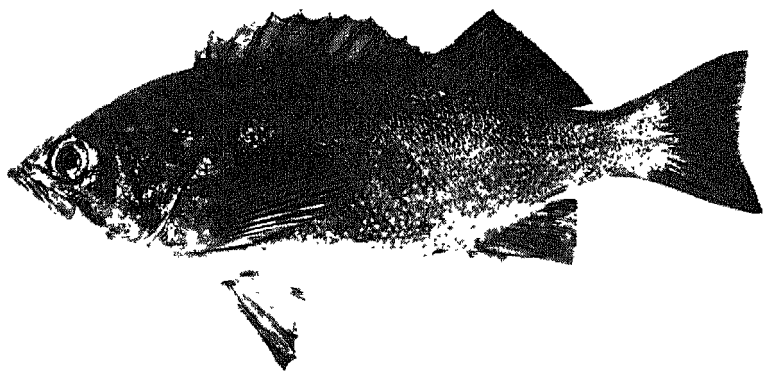
A king salmon is caught by anglers at Newport jetty on the Oregon Coast.

*Photo Oregon Game Commission*



King salmon are the prize sports fish of inshore Pacific Coast angling. Kings generally weigh about 20 pounds but occasionally they run as heavy as 75 pounds. When the kings are "in" everything stops, for their appearance creates much excitement in the area.

*Photo California Department of Fish and Game*



Blue rockfish, commonly known as priestfish, are caught inshore in medium depth water all along the Pacific Coast. There are 60 species of rockfish.

*Photo California Department of Fish and Game*



Big California sea bass weigh up to 500 pounds and it is a day's work to haul one in on sports fishing tackle.

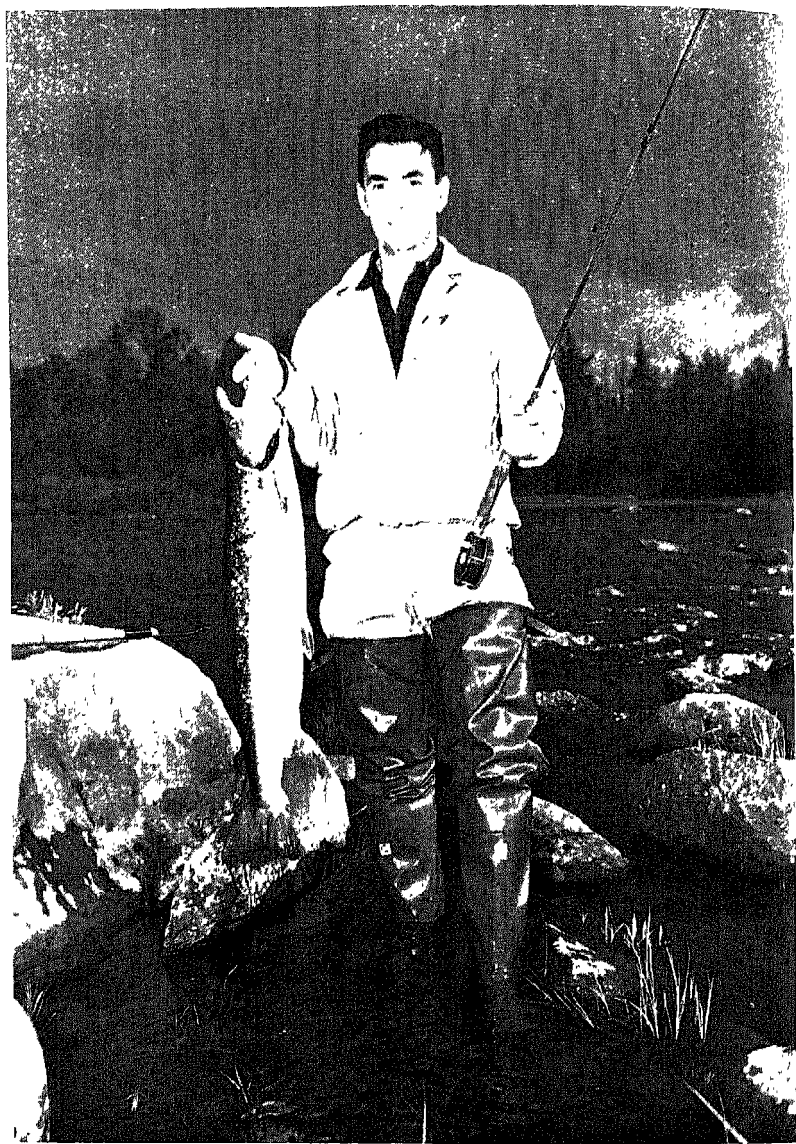
*Photo Marineland of the Pacific, Palos Verdes Estates, California*



This 21-pound pollack was taken while trolling out of Eastport, Maine. The pollack is fast becoming a favorite sports fish.



The author displays a 16-pound striped bass which he caught off Long Island, New York.



This lucky Maine angler holds an Atlantic salmon weighing over 25 pounds. It was taken in the Machia River.

*Photo Maine Department of Economic Development*



The author displays a 2½-pound porgy caught on a charter trip.

*Photo Sam Mooradian*



Shown are some of the larger bluefish taken on the same trip.

*Photo Sam Mooradian*

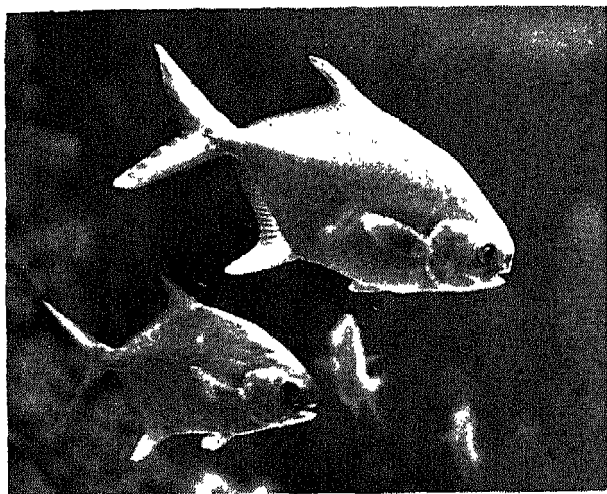




The author holds a 5-pound bluefish caught in the Atlantic surf.



Renee Ulrich, the author's wife, displays a catch of two fine pompano.



Considering their weight, pompano are the scrappiest fish in the ocean. They are also table delicacies and bring several dollars a pound.

*Photo Seaquarium, Miami, Florida*

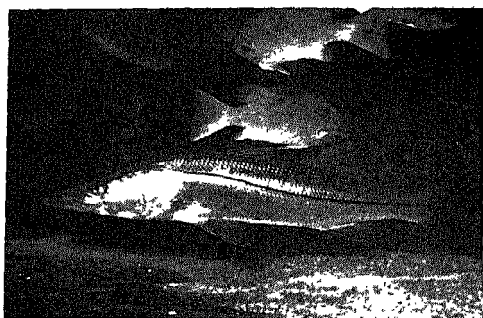
This angler holds a bone-  
fish—one of the true prizes  
of tropical inshore fishing.

*Photo Bermuda News Bureau*



Sheepshead are inshore sports fish which have the  
annoying habit of only nibbling at the bait.

*Photo Seaquarium, Miami, Florida*



A snook is the bait caster's delight. This monster would take well over an hour to land.

*Photo Marine Studios, Marineland, Florida*



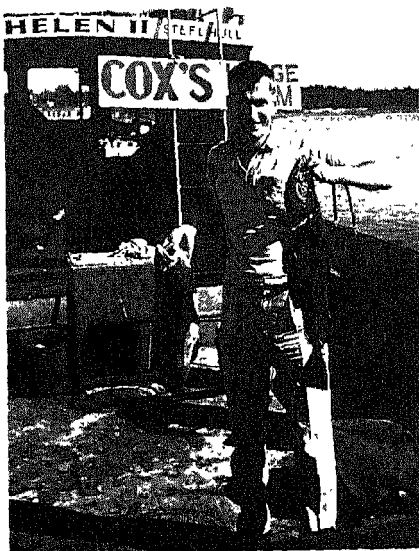
Pictured is a large cobia, both a top and bottom sports fish.

*Photo Marine Studios, Marineland, Florida*



Any angler who hooks this 300-pound spotted jewfish would think he had snagged the rock behind him.

*Photo Marine Studios, Marineland, Florida*



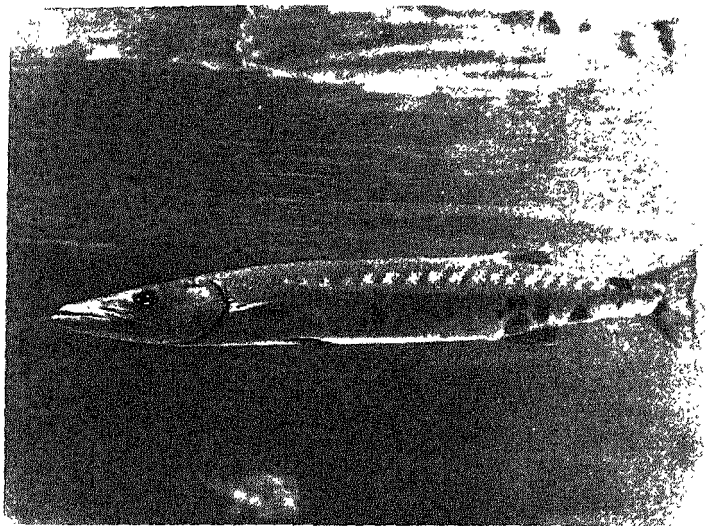
A 23- and an 18-pound  
cod taken at Cox's ledge  
by boats of the Montauk  
fleet.

*Photo Seaquarium, Miami, Florida*



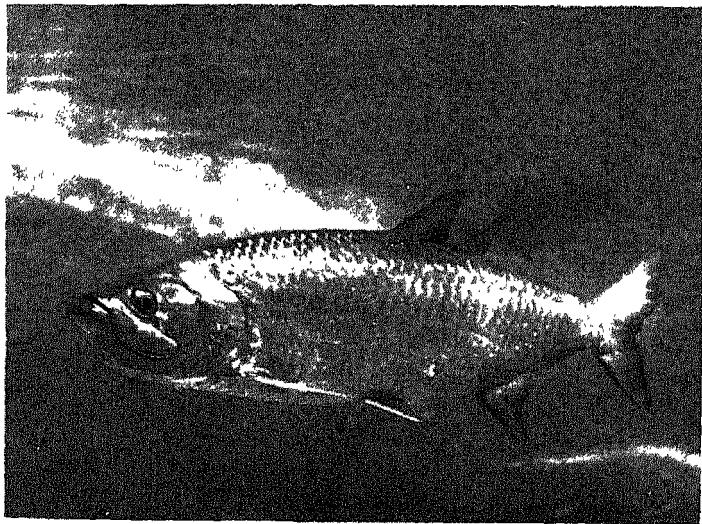
This fluke's open mouth  
displays a fully developed  
set of teeth.

*Photo Sam Mooradian*



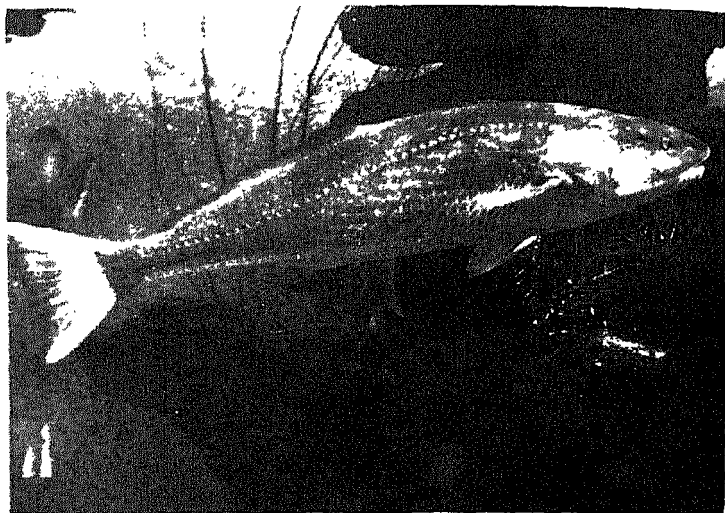
Here is a long lean barracuda lying in wait for its prey.

*Photo Marine Studios, Marineland, Florida*



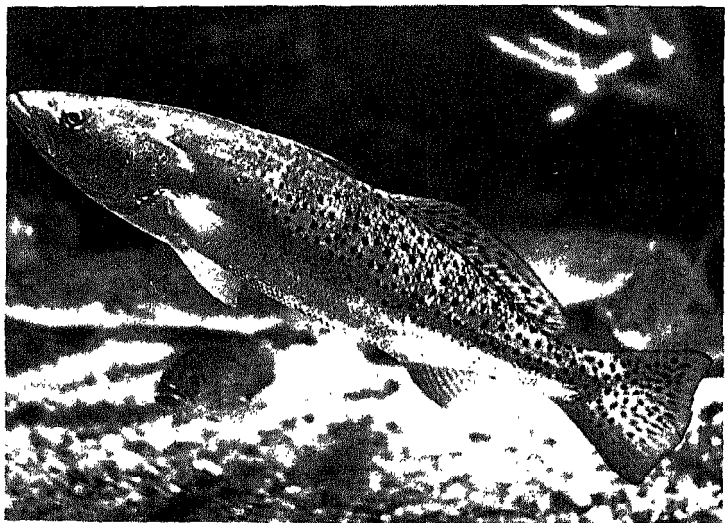
A plug worked over the head of this big tarpon would quickly bring him to some violent action.

*Photo Marine Studios, Marineland, Florida*



This big channel bass is a favorite of surf casters from Texas to Maryland.

*Photo Marine Studios, Marineland, Florida*



Large spotted sea trout, or weakfish, like this one can be taken all along the warm inshore waters of the Atlantic and Gulf states.

*Photo Seaquarium, Miami, Florida*

<i>Popular name:</i>	Grunion
<i>Latin name:</i>	Leuresthes tenuis
<i>Other names:</i>	Smelt, California grunion
<i>Size:</i>	Four to 7 inches
<i>Description:</i>	A small silvery fish with a greenish back
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Southern half of California
<i>Baits:</i>	None
<i>How fished:</i>	Picked off the beach at night when they come onto land to spawn in July and August
<i>Tackle:</i>	None—picked up by hand
<i>Rig: Line</i>	None
<i>Hooks</i>	<i>Leader</i> , none
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good
<i>Comments:</i>	Lots of fun trying to grab them between waves on the beach.

\* \* \*

<i>Popular name:</i>	Halibut, California
<i>Latin name:</i>	Paralichthys californicus
<i>Other names:</i>	Halibut, southern halibut, alabato
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 5 feet in length and 60 pounds in weight; 5 to 25 pounds is average
<i>Description:</i>	A flounder. Has high arch in lateral line above pectoral fin
<i>Area of activity:</i>	California, south of Point of Conception
<i>Baits:</i>	Squid clams, and baitfish live or shrip cut. Queenfish are excellent bait offshore while live anchovies attract them near shore
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fishing from piers, barges, skiffs or other boats
<i>Tackle:</i>	Sturdy bay rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	12-30-lb. test
<i>Hooks</i>	<i>Leader</i> , wire
<i>Edibility:</i>	No. 2 to 3/0
<i>Comments:</i>	Excellent
	Much fishing for them is from party boats in southern California. Many medium-sized halibut are taken by inshore fishermen.

\* \* \*



## 66 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

<i>Popular name:</i>	Halibut, Pacific
<i>Latin name:</i>	Hippoglossus stenolepis
<i>Other names:</i>	Northern halibut, albato
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 9 feet long and 500 pounds in weight. Females are much larger than males
<i>Description:</i>	A flounder of monstrous proportions. Has a lateral line with a high arch over the pectoral fin
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Washington, Oregon, and northern California
<i>Baits:</i>	Anchovies sardines, strip-cut bait, and sometimes jigs
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fished with baits or by jigging
<i>Tackle:</i>	Heavy-duty rods with 16-oz. rod tips; 9/0 reels. Usually heavy sinkers are required to hold bottom in waters where these fish are found
<i>Rig: Line</i>	24-thread <i>Leader</i> , wire
<i>Hooks</i>	4/0 to 10/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Excellent
<i>Comments:</i>	Fish up to 40 pounds are taken inshore during spring and summer on medium tackle. The really monstrous specimens are taken in water from 50 to 500 feet in depth.

\* \* \*

<i>Popular name:</i>	Jack Crevallé
<i>Latin name:</i>	Caranx hippos
<i>Other names:</i>	Common jack, jack, toro, crevallé, horse crevallé
<i>Size:</i>	Two to 5 pounds are average, with some attaining 40 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Has white sides, a greenish back, and yellow underneath. A sharp forked tail and a dark spot on the gill covers further help identify the fish
<i>Area of activity:</i>	The Florida Keys and throughout the Gulf of Mexico
<i>Baits:</i>	Mulletts, small fish, crustaceans, surface or deep running plugs or spoons
<i>How fished:</i>	Smaller jacks school up in bays and river mouths and can be taken from shore or from skiffs. The bigger ones stay offshore and are often taken by trolling

<i>Tackle:</i>	For inshore fishing a baitcasting or spinning rod while offshore fishing calls for a 6/9 outfit with a 6 ounce tip
<i>Rig: Line</i>	9 to 21 thread
<i>Hooks</i>	Leader, stainless steel 4/0 to 9/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Edible but not the best eating
<i>Comments:</i>	Jacks are known as tackle busters because of their stubborn fighting qualities. A fisherman must always be on guard against one of their sudden hard dives for freedom.

\* \* \*

<i>Popular name:</i>	Jewfish, Black
<i>Latin name:</i>	Garrupa nigrita
<i>Other names:</i>	Warsaw grouper, jewish, black grouper
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 600 pounds and 6 feet in length; average size 20 to 75 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A black fish with gray patches. Fish has a somewhat flat head
<i>Area of activity:</i>	The Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic as far north as the Carolinas
<i>Baits:</i>	Mullet, strip-cut fish
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fished from boats
<i>Tackle:</i>	Short, heavy-duty rods
<i>Rig: Line</i>	24 to 36 thread line
<i>Hooks</i>	Leader, wire or chain 10/0 to 12/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good
<i>Comments:</i>	Best fishing is in channels and on the reefs. A stubborn fish that is hard to move off the bottom.

\* \* \*

<i>Popular name:</i>	Jewfish, Spotted
<i>Latin name:</i>	Promicrops itaiara
<i>Other names:</i>	Jewfish, mero, sea Bass, giant sea bass, junefish
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 800 pounds and six feet in length. Average 150 to 300 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Identified largely by its size. Dark color sometimes a chocolate brown. The young fish have black dots which they lose at maturity

## 68 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

<i>Area of activity:</i>	Gulf of Mexico and the Florida Keys
<i>Baits:</i>	A whole mullet, ladyfish, or other small fish, or strip-cut fish
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fished from a small boat or from piers or bridges
<i>Tackle:</i>	Short, heavy-duty rods or tarred lines
<i>Rig: Line</i>	24 to 36 thread <i>Leader</i> , 1/32-inch chain
<i>Hooks</i>	1/0 to 3/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good—cut into steaks
<i>Comments:</i>	Found near wrecks, pilings, and in deep pot holes near shore. Occasionally taken trolling a spoon very slowly through their holes. Upon hooking, fish should be pumped continuously.

\* \* \*

<i>Popular name:</i>	Ladyfish
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Elops saurus</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Skipjack, tenpounder, bigeye herring, shiro, tenpound herring
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 8 pounds; average 1 to 2 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A long thin silvery fish with small scales
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean north to Cape Hatteras
<i>Baits:</i>	Shrimp, crab, crustacea, mullet, plugs, and spoons
<i>How fished:</i>	Fished from a boat or from bridges and trestles by casting or still fishing
<i>Tackle:</i>	Light boat rods or fly rods
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5-lb. test mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon or light wire
<i>Hooks</i>	1/0 to 2/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Poor eating because fish has many small bones
<i>Comments:</i>	The fish are hard fighters and savage strikers. They will hit almost any plug made.

\* \* \*

<i>Popular name:</i>	Ling Cod
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Ophiodon elongatus</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Ling, Pacific cultus, cultus cod, greenling, blue cod, buffalo cod

<i>Size:</i>	Average 1 to 7 pounds but some weigh up to 70 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Mottled bluish top, green to bluish underneath. The fish has a long dorsal fin and a scaleless head
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Washington to California. Best fishing is north of Point of Conception, California
<i>Baits:</i>	Cut herring or sardines or metal jigs
<i>How fished:</i>	Caught by surf casting, bottom fishing, or jigging
<i>Tackle:</i>	Bay rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	10 to 20 thread
<i>Hooks</i>	4/0 to 5/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Excellent eating. At times the flesh is greenish in color but this is not detrimental to eating
<i>Comments:</i>	Although this is an ugly fish it is a leading sports fish of the Pacific because of its abundance and food value.

\* \* \*

<i>Popular name:</i>	Mackerel, Common
<i>Latin name:</i>	Scomber scombrus
<i>Other names:</i>	Mackerel, Boston Mackerel, spikes
<i>Size:</i>	About a pound, with some running to 3 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Black on upper sides with printlike markings—green along lateral lines and silvery below
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Maine to New Jersey
<i>Baits:</i>	Any small bait fish, streamer flies, metal squids, spoons, or wobblers
<i>How fished:</i>	Troll or still fish by working up a chum line
<i>Tackle:</i>	Light tackle, spinning or bait-casting rods
<i>Rig: Line</i>	6-12 thread
<i>Hooks</i>	2/0 to 4/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Excellent. They sometimes have a tendency to get soft if the water gets too warm
<i>Comments:</i>	These fish are good sport in the northeastern bays where they often turn up in large schools. They are hard fighters and fast swimmers.

\* \* \*

## 70 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

<i>Popular name:</i>	Mackerel, King
<i>Latin name:</i>	Scomberomorus cavalla
<i>Other names:</i>	Cero, kingfish, cavalla, silver cero, Florida Kingfish, black salmon
<i>Size:</i>	Average 10 to 15 pounds, but have run up to 70 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A silver body with the back and upper sides a blue green. The lateral line curves down at the rear of the body length
<i>Area of activity:</i>	North Carolina to Florida on the Atlantic Coast and the Gulf of Mexico
<i>Baits:</i>	Strip-cut menhaden, squid and shrimp, metal squid, spoons or rags
<i>How fished:</i>	Caught in schools on the reefs. They are active fish that are always on the move and therefore are often taken by trolling
<i>Tackle:</i>	Medium to heavy rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	10 to 20 thread <i>Leader</i> , wire
<i>Hooks</i>	6/0 to 7/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	A good eating fish
<i>Comments:</i>	Cero are hard strikers and vicious fighters on a hook. The biggest of these specimens are taken in cloudy inshore waters, while the smaller ones tend to stay offshore in clear water. These fish are followers of the Gulf Stream.

\* \* \*

<i>Popular name:</i>	Mackerel Pacific
<i>Latin name:</i>	Pneumatophorus diego (considered by some to be a subspecies of <i>Pneumatophorus japonicus</i> )
<i>Other names:</i>	Mackerel, greenback, green jack
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 25 inches and 6 pounds in weight. One to 3 pounds are average
<i>Description:</i>	A mackerel. Dark green to blue back with dark-green irregular bars. Silvery on sides
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Entire Pacific Coast
<i>Baits:</i>	Pile worms, shrimp, crab or sardine. Also flies and plugs
<i>How fished:</i>	Bait casting, trolling or still fishing

*Tackle:* Light spinning rod or a 9 foot fly rod  
*Rig: Line* 5-lb. test mono. *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* No. 4 to 1/0  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* Taken in shallow water during summer and fall. Best fishing is in southern half of California.

*Popular name:* Mackerel, Spanish  
*Latin name:* *Scomberomorus maculatus*  
*Other names:* Sierra Mackerel, cero, spotted mackerel  
*Size:* Up to 25 pounds and 4 feet long. Average 2 to 4 pounds  
*Description:* Spotted with brown spots on its side and has small whisker-like finlets behind dorsal and anal fins. A lateral line runs from head to tail but curves down toward the anal fin as it passes the second dorsal fin.  
*Area of Activity:* The Atlantic from the Keys to North Carolina and the Gulf of Mexico.  
*Baits:* Small fish, mullet and menhaden, spoons, metal squid and flies.  
*How fished:* Trolling is most popular method; also still fishing.  
*Tackle:* Medium rod  
*Rig: Line* 10- to 20-lb. mono. *Leader:* wire  
*Hooks* 3/0 to 5/0  
*Edibility:* Excellent  
*Comments:* The fish stay close to the surface and like warm water. Many times the action gets truly spectacular.

*Popular name:* Perch, Opaleye  
*Latin name:* *Girella nigricans*  
*Other names:* Black perch, blue perch, blue eye  
*Size:* Up to 7 pounds  
*Description:* Has blue eyes; twelve rays in anal fin. Looks like a perch. Dark-colored greenish back

## 72 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

**Area of activity:** The California coast. More abundant along southern reaches of the Coast

**Baits:** Mussels, shrimp

**How fished:** Near rocks

**Tackle:** Light

**Rig:** *Line* 5-lb. monofilament *Leader*, nylon

*Hooks* No. 5 or 6

**Edibility:** Good

**Comments:** Not actually a member of the perch family but is caught like a perch and fishermen recognize it as one.

\* \* \*

**Popular name:** Perch (Sea), Rubberlip

**Latin name:** *Rhacochilus toxotes*

**Other names:** Pile perch, porgy, surf perch, liverlip

**Size:** Up to 18 inches

**Description:** Perch shape. Pelvic and dorsal fin are black-tipped

**Area of activity:** California

**Baits:** Mussels, worms, and sand crab

**How fished:** From shore, beaches and rocks, and in the bays

**Tackle:** Light

**Rig:** *Line* 5-lb. mono. *Leader*, nylon

*Hooks* No. 4 to 5

**Edibility:** Good—considered best food fish of surf perch

**Comments:** The fish is often taken in or near weeds. Perch family of fish are all live bearers.

\* \* \*

**Popular name:** Perch, Striped

**Latin name:** *Embiotoca lateralis*

**Other names:** Striped sea perch, blue perch, squawfish

**Size:** Up to 15 inches. Sometimes attains a weight of 3 pounds

**Description:** Perch shape. Many definite horizontal stripes. Color, orange and blue

**Area of activity:** Entire Pacific coast

**Baits:** Worms, mussels, and shrimp

*How fished:* Rock fishing, fishing in bays and near weeds  
*Tackle:* Light  
*Rig: Line* 5-lb. test mono. *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* No. 4 to 5  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* A good scrappy fish on light tackle.

*Popular name:* Perch (Surf), Barred  
*Latin name:* *Amphistichus argenteus*  
*Other names:* Surf perch, silver perch  
*Size:* Up to 15 inches  
*Description:* Has green and brown vertical bars that alternate with rows of spots. Perch shape  
*Area of activity:* California coast. More abundant south of Point of Conception  
*Baits:* Mussels and worms  
*How fished:* Rockfishing and surf fishing from beaches  
Taken in bays and near shore by boat fishermen  
*Tackle:* Light Surf rod or spinning rod  
*Rig: Line* 5- to 15-lb. mono. *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* No. 4 to 6  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* Considered one of the top sports fish of the perch family.

*Popular name:* Permit  
*Latin name:* *Trachinotus goodei*  
*Other names:* Giant pompano, pompano  
*Size:* Up to 60 pounds, record 42 pounds, but average weight is 10 to 25 pounds  
*Description:* Fish has bright blue back, silvery sides, and a deeply forked tail. Shaped like a pompano  
*Area of activity:* The coast of southern Florida and the Keys  
*Baits:* Live shrimp, hermit crab, and crawfish. Jigs  
*How fished:* Trolling in outside waters. On the flats, by fishing bonefish style. Inshore trolling is also productive



## 74 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

*Tackle:* Medium to heavy boat and spinning rods  
*Rig: Line* 15-20 lb.-test Mono. *Leader*, wire, sometimes heavy nylon  
*Hooks* 3/0 to 5/0  
*Edibility:* Excellent  
*Comments:* The fish is known for its first hard run. It can also be taken by a method of slow jigging on the bottom.

*Popular name:* Sole, Petrale  
*Latin name:* *Eopsetta jordani*  
*Other names:* English Sole, California sole, brill  
*Size:* Up to 20 inches in length and 8 pounds in weight  
*Description:* A flatfish. Does not have a high arch in lateral line. Dorsal and anal fins have brown and dark blotches  
*Area of activity:* Pacific Coast as far south as Point of Conception, California  
*Baits:* Shrimp, anchovies, and strip-cut bait  
*How fished:* Bottom fished  
*Tackle:* Light to medium boats rods. Hand lines  
*Rig: Line* 5-lb. test *Leader*, nylon  
*Hooks* No. 1 to No. 2  
*Edibility:* Excellent  
*Comments:* Caught abundantly in shallow water during the summer months.

*Popular name:* Pollack  
*Latin name:* *Pollachius virens*  
*Other names:* Harbor pollock, silver cod, green cod, coal fish  
*Size:* Up to 25 pounds, common up to 5 pounds  
*Description:* A silver fish streamlined in shape. Young fish have a small barbel on lower jaw  
*Area of activity:* Maine to New Jersey  
*Baits:* Clams, small fish, metal squids, weighted plugs and spoons

<i>How fished:</i>	Boat fishing generally off the bottom, occasionally top fishing when fish are chasing bait fish Also surf fishing
<i>Tackle:</i>	Medium bait-casting or spinning outfit
<i>Rig: Line</i>	6- to 12-thread line 5 to 20 lb. test mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	1/0 to 4/0 for inshore fish, 4/0 to 8/0 for offshore.
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good
<i>Comments:</i>	Pollack are primarily a bottom fish, caught 5 to 10 feet off the bottom.

<i>Popular name:</i>	Pompano
<i>Latin name:</i>	Trachinotus carolinus
<i>Other names:</i>	Common pompano, cobblefish, palometa
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 8 pounds, average 1 to 3 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Silvery sides and gray-blue back with lower fins yellow. Fish has a hairlip appearance and has a deeply forked tail
<i>Area of activity:</i>	The Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic as far north as North Carolina.
<i>Baits:</i>	Shrimp, live minnows, clams, or cut bait
<i>How fished:</i>	From the surf
<i>Tackle:</i>	Fly rods, light spinning rods, bait-casting rods, or light boat rods
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5- to 15-lb. test mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 1 to 2/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Excellent
<i>Comments:</i>	This fish is known for its fine flavor and is also one of the hardest fighting little fish in the ocean.

<i>Popular name:</i>	Porgy, Northern
<i>Latin name:</i>	Stenotomus chrysops
<i>Other names:</i>	Common porgy, scup, northern scup, northern porgy, fair maid
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 4 pounds, common up to 2 pounds

## 76 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

*Description:* A silvery fish with a brownish top. Fish has a steep profile and a short snout  
*Area of activity:* Cape Cod to North Carolina  
*Baits:* Live or cut shrimp, clams, crabs, marine worms or cut fish. Occasionally small spinners  
*How fished:* Still fished on the bottom. Slow trolling while keeping baits down low  
*Tackle:* Light salt-water bait-casting rod or a boat rod  
*Rig: Line* 6 to 9 thread 10- to 15-lb. mono. *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* No. 6 to 1/0 inshore, 1/0 to 4/0 offshore  
*Edibility:* Excellent  
*Comments:* Porgies hit in short rapid jerks and should be struck immediately.

*Popular name:* Porgy, Southern  
*Latin name:* *Stenotomus aculeatus*  
*Other names:* Fair maid, southern porgy, paugy  
*Size:* Up to 4 pounds, usually  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 pound  
*Description:* A silvery fish with a browish top. Fish has a steep profile like the northern porgy but has a longer snout  
*Area of activity:* North Carolina to Florida and the Gulf of Mexico  
*Baits:* Live or cut shrimp, crabs, marine worms, or small bait fish  
*How fished:* Still fished  
*Tackle:* Any light rod or a cane pole  
*Rig: Line* 5-lb. mono. *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* No. 1 to 1/0  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* Fish are generally slightly smaller than Northern Porgies.

*Popular name:* Queenfish  
*Latin name:* *Seriphus politus*  
*Other names:* Croaker, herring, herring croaker

<i>Size:</i>	Up to 1 foot; possibly attaining 2 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Two dorsal fins as on other croakers. Topside bluish while sides are silvery
<i>Area of activity:</i>	California Coast more abundant in southern reaches
<i>Baits:</i>	Chum and snag
<i>How fished:</i>	Jigged on snag lines
<i>Tackle:</i>	Light
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5-lb. mono. <i>Leader</i> , none
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 2 to 4
<i>Edibility:</i>	Used as bait fish—edible
<i>Comments:</i>	Make excellent bait for larger fish.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Rockfish, Black
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Sebastes melanops</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Rockfish, blackfish, black sea bass, black rock cod, rock
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 20 inches in length. Average weight from 2 to 6 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Black in color; Has lower jaw slightly protruding
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Washington, Oregon, and the California Coast as far South as Point of Conception
<i>Baits:</i>	Anchovies, sardines, strip-cut fish and trolled lures, spoons or jigs
<i>How fished:</i>	Can be taken trolling a lure or spoon deeply and slowly. Fished from shore or in shallow water
<i>Tackle:</i>	Light tackle
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5- to 10-lb. test mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	2/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good
<i>Comments:</i>	Probably the most important sports fish of the Rockfish group. The rockfish family are all live bearers of young.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Rockfish, Blue
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Sebastes mystinus</i>

## 78 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

*Other names:* Black rockfish, priest fish, blue perch  
*Size:* Up to 20 inches in length; average weight from 2 to 5 pounds  
*Description:* Long deeply notched dorsal fin. No spiny top of head  
*Area of activity:* Entire Pacific Coast  
*Baits:* Strip cut bait  
*How fished:* Rock fishing in moderately deep water or near shore  
*Tackle:* Any light tackle  
*Rig: Line* 10-lb. test mono. *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* 1/0 to 4/0  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* Many are taken in shallow water.

\* \* \*

*Popular name:* Rockfish, Orange  
*Latin name:* *Sebastes pinniger*  
*Other names:* Canary rockfish, codalarga, filione, Bosco  
*Size:* Up to 30 inches; 3 to 20 pounds  
*Description:* Orange in color; has a lower jaw that is smooth to touch  
*Area of activity:* Entire West Coast  
*Baits:* Strip-cut bait, sardines, herring  
*How fished:* Fishing over rocks in moderately deep water. Small specimens are caught from the rocks near shore  
*Tackle:* Medium bay rods  
*Rig: Line* 20-lb. test *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* 3/0  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* An important rockfish for anglers.

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*Popular name:* Rockfish, Tambor  
*Latin name:* *Sebastes ruberrimus*  
*Other names:* Turkey rockfish, red snapper  
*Size:* Up to 38 inches in length; occasionally approaches 30 pounds

*Description:* Bright red in color on the back. Yellow to pink sides  
*Area of activity:* Entire Pacific Coast. More abundant in the North  
*Baits:* Strip-cut bait  
*How fished:* Fishing over rocks in moderately deep water  
*Tackle:* Medium tackle glass rods; hand lines  
*Rig: Line* 36-lb. test *Leader,* nylon  
*Hooks* 4/0  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* Largest of the rockfishes

*Popular name:* Salmon, Atlantic  
*Latin name:* *Salmo salar*  
*Other names:* Maine salmon, New England salmon  
*Size:* Up to 75 pounds, Salmon return from sea weighing 10 to 20 pounds; 14 inches is the legal size  
*Description:* Silvery in color in salt water, turning brownish in fresh water  
*Area of activity:* Maine  
*Baits:* Salmon flies  
*How fished:* Wading in salmon rivers and fly fishing  
*Tackle:* Six-ounce rods  
*Rig: Line* Tapered fly-rod line *Leader,* gut or nylon  
*Hooks* Salmon hooks  
*Edibility:* Excellent  
*Comments:* In the United States salmon found only in following rivers: Machias River, East Machias River, Narraguagus River, Dennys River, Sheepscot River, Pleasant River, and Penobscot River.

*Popular name:* Salmon, Chinook  
*Latin name:* *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*  
*Other names:* King salmon, king, spring salmon, quinnat salmon, tyee, tule

## 80 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

<i>Size:</i>	Up to 4 feet and 100 pounds. 10- to 45-pound fish are common
<i>Description:</i>	A salmon. Greenish back, fading silvery on sides and belly. Many black spots on back. Spawning fish grow dark
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Pacific Coast as far south as central California
<i>Baits:</i>	Herring, silver spoons, jigs, spinners
<i>How fished:</i>	Fished from skiffs or charter boats by trolling or mooching with a herring
<i>Tackle:</i>	Spinning tackle 8-foot rod or a boat rod—medium. 2/0 to 4/0 reel
<i>Rig: Line</i>	25- to 36-lb. test
<i>Hooks</i>	Leader, wire
<i>Edibility:</i>	2/0 to 6/0
<i>Comments:</i>	Excellent
	If fish are not on top, set up the fishing so the bait or lure is 5 to 15 feet off the bottom. Catch one of these and you have caught the king of the Pacific inshore fish. Fish are generally taken just as they are preparing to head upstream to spawn, after which they die.

\* \* \*

<i>Popular name:</i>	Salmon, Silver
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Coho, coho, silversides
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 3 feet and 25 pounds. Record 31 pounds. Average fish weigh 8 to 15 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A salmon. Metallic-blue back with silvery sides and an underneath that is reddish during spawning
<i>Area of activity:</i>	The Pacific Coast as far south as Monterey
<i>Baits:</i>	Herring, or small fish; streamer flies or spoons
<i>How fished:</i>	Fished from skiffs, party or charter boats; Fly fishing, bait fishing, mooching, or by trolling
<i>Tackle:</i>	Fly rod, spinning rod—light to medium
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5- to 20-lb. mono.
<i>Hooks</i>	Leader, nylon or wire
<i>Edibility:</i>	1/0 to 3/0
<i>Comments:</i>	Excellent
	These fish spawn in the third year of life. Puget Sound, the Oregon Coast, and northern

California all offer good silver salmon fishing. A real hot spot is Puget Sound in September. A real sports fish; flashy, hard fighters and murderous strikers.

<i>Popular name:</i>	Shad
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Alosa sapidissima</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	American shad, white shad
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 12 pounds, average 2 to 5 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A herring, silvery in color with a dark-colored shoulder
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Maine to Florida and the West Coast
<i>Baits:</i>	Flys, spinners, and spoons
<i>How fished:</i>	Fished from small boats or from shore at mouths of rivers and in bays
<i>Tackle:</i>	Fly rods or light spinning tackle
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5- to 15-lb. mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	3/0 to 8/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good; shad roe a delicacy
<i>Comments:</i>	Shad was introduced to the West Coast in 1871 and now thrives there. The shad of the Hudson and Delaware rivers will not take a hook.

<i>Popular name:</i>	Sheepshead
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Archosargus probatocephalus</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Convict fish, sargo, prison fish
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 25 pounds, average 1 to 3 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Flat, protruding teeth, and high sharp dorsal fins distinguish the fish. It also has sharp black and white vertical bars that give it the name prison fish
<i>Area of activity:</i>	The Gulf Coast and the Atlantic as far north as Cape Cod
<i>Baits:</i>	Shrimp, clams, fiddler crabs, or blue crabs
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fished from boats or bridges
<i>Tackle:</i>	Any bay rod



## 82 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

*Rig:* Line 6 to 12 thread *Leader,* wire  
*Hooks* No. 4 to 1/0  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* These fish are notorious bait thieves and must be struck on the first feel of a nibble. A way to get them active is to scrape barnacles off pilings and throw them in the water.

\* \* \*

*Popular name:* Smelt  
*Latin name:* *Osmerus mordax*  
*Other names:* Winterfish, frostfish  
*Size:* Weighs a fraction of a pound, measures 7 to 14 inches  
*Description:* A silvery fish  
*Area of activity:* North Carolina to Maine  
*Baits:* Pieces of clam or worm  
*How fished:* Still fished, using four to six hooks  
*Tackle:* Canepole  
*Rig: Line* Any *Leader,* none  
*Hooks* No. 6 to No. 10  
*Edibility:* Good  
*Comments:* A cold-weather fish that is fun to catch from a rowboat.

\* \* \*

*Popular name:* Snapper, Mangrove  
*Latin name:* *Lutjanus griseus*  
*Other names:* Gray snapper, lawyer, pargo, pensacola snapper  
*Size:* Up to 20 pounds, average 1 to 5 pounds  
*Description:* Color of fish varies with terrain, generally rosy-colored sides, white belly and silvery dorsal fins. Fish has faint vertical bars  
*Area of activity:* The Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Coast as far north as New Jersey  
*Baits:* Shrimp, crawfish, crabs or small or cut fish  
*How fished:* Fish is caught around jetties, inshore reefs and pilings  
*Tackle:* 8- to 12-ounce rod

<i>Size:</i>	Up to 17 pounds; average 1 to 5 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Orange-yellowish or grayish anal and pelvic fins. Has irregular dark blotches on its side. Protruding lower jaw and two canine teeth on upper jaw.
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Massachusetts to Florida; fish gets relatively scarce south of Cape Hatteras
<i>Baits:</i>	Minnows, shrimps, mullets, clams, crabs, metal jigs
<i>How fished:</i>	Fished from a boat by bait casting and working up a chum line
<i>Tackle:</i>	Light salt-water equipment, bait casting or spinning
<i>Rig: Line</i>	6 to 12-thread line <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	1/0 to 5/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good
<i>Comments:</i>	Fish are caught in grass shrimp chum lines when the bait is allowed to drift into the line.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Weakfish, Sand
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Cynoscion arenarius</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Sand sea trout, sea trout
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 4 pounds, average 1 pound
<i>Description:</i>	Has none of the dark spots that characterize other weakfish but has bright colors
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Gulf of Mexico
<i>Baits:</i>	Shrimp, strip-cut fish, crustacea, streamer flies
<i>How fished:</i>	Trolling, casting, or still fishing
<i>Tackle:</i>	Any light tackle
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5-lb. test mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	1/0 to 2/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Edible
<i>Comments:</i>	Has a typical soft weakfish mouth that is easily ripped. The fish tends to stay in bays near oyster beds where great numbers of them can be caught on a single trip.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Weakfish, Silver
<i>Latin name:</i>	Cynoscion nothus
<i>Other names:</i>	Silver sea trout, weakfish, sea trout
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 3 pounds, average 1 pound
<i>Description:</i>	Pale colors with pale and faded spots
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Coast as far north as Chesapeake Bay
<i>Baits:</i>	Shrimp, strip-cut bait, crustacea, spoons, spinners
<i>How fished:</i>	Trolling, casting, or still fishing
<i>Tackle:</i>	Any light tackle or cane poles
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5-lb. test mono. Leader, nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	1/0 to 2/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Edible
<i>Comments:</i>	A small fish sometimes considered a pest.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Weakfish, Spotted
<i>Latin name:</i>	Cynoscion nebulosus
<i>Other names:</i>	Spotted sea trout, southern weakfish, trout, sea trout, speckled sea trout
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 15 pounds, average 3 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	Fish has a dark back and silvery sides. It is covered with many dark trout spots
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean north to Chesapeake Bay
<i>Baits:</i>	Shrimp, small fish, strip-cut bait, crustacea, bucktail flies, spoons, spinners or jigs
<i>How fished:</i>	Trolling, casting or still fishing. From a boat or from shore
<i>Tackle:</i>	Any light tackle, fly rods or cane poles
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5 lb. mono. Leader, nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	1/0 to 4/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good; the fish should be kept alive as long as possible for it has a tendency to dry out if kept too long
<i>Comments:</i>	Landing nets are suggested for all weakfish because of their soft mouths. Never force a weakfish while fighting him.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Whiting, Gulf
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Menticirrhus littoralis</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Gulf king whiting, king whiting, king, silver whiting
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 3 pounds, average $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound
<i>Description:</i>	A silvery fish with a white belly; has a small mouth
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Gulf of Mexico
<i>Baits:</i>	Clams, worms, mussels, sand fleas and pieces of cut fish
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fished
<i>Tackle:</i>	Any light tackle
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5-lb. test mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 1 to 3/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Edible
<i>Comments:</i>	Fish is caught in the shallow surf over sandy beaches and in shallow sandy sections of bays.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Whiting, Northern
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Menticirrhus saxatilis</i>
<i>Other names:</i>	Kingfish, northern kingfish, sea mullet, whiting
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 6 pounds; average 1 to 3 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A croaker. Gray with bare blotches on sides and has a single barbel on its chin
<i>Area of activity:</i>	Maine to Florida
<i>Baits:</i>	Shrimp, live or cut bait fish or sand fleas
<i>How fished:</i>	Bottom fished from boats or bridges, etc.
<i>Tackle:</i>	Light spinning rod or any other light rod
<i>Rig: Line</i>	5- to 10-lbs. test mono. <i>Leader</i> , nylon
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 1 to 2/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Edible
<i>Comments:</i>	This fish is found in abundance in Chesapeake Bay. It is more common north of Chesapeake Bay than farther south.

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<i>Popular name:</i>	Yellowtail
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Seriola dorsalis</i>

90 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

<i>Other names:</i>	California yellowtail, amberjack
<i>Size:</i>	Up to 5 feet in length and 80 pounds in weight. Average weight 10 to 15 pounds
<i>Description:</i>	A bright metallic colored fish with a horizontal yellow stripe
<i>Area of activity:</i>	California, Point of Conception, southward
<i>Baits:</i>	Anchovies, sardine, small bait fish, feathered jigs, plugs, spoons, or strip-cut bait
<i>How fished:</i>	Trolling or still fishing by chumming
<i>Tackle:</i>	Medium to heavy duty spinning rods
<i>Rig: Line</i>	20- to 36-lb. mono. <i>Leader</i> , wire
<i>Hooks</i>	No. 2 to 2/0
<i>Edibility:</i>	Good
<i>Comments:</i>	Yellowtail are generally caught far offshore. Santa Catalina Island fishing is best for them in May and June. They are hard-fighting sports fish that are famous for their first wild run.

### **Part III**

#### *Atlantic and Gulf Species*



## Amberjack

The amberjack is a highly regarded sports fish, found all year in large quantities in the Florida Keys and the Florida Gulf coast up to the Ten Thousand Islands region. In the summer months they are taken regularly north as far as North Carolina in the Atlantic, and also are common off the reefs throughout the Gulf.

This fish is caught by trolling on the reefs where the water is over 15 feet in depth. He is a hard hitter and means business from the time he strikes. On a hit he will fight, slashing back and forth just under the surface of the water and then suddenly changing his tactics and diving for those sharp coral reefs where his line-cutting chances are much better. Anyone who has ever had a tussle with a 35-pounder of this species knows he has had a fight.

The common size of amberjacks varies from 15 to 20 pounds, and anything over that is considered a big fish. But they do get bigger; in fact, a few go over a hundred pounds. The record is 120 pounds, 8 ounces, taken in Hawaii.

Amberjacks will strike viciously at spoons, weighted lures, or jigs running five or ten feet under the water. A red and white barracuda jig has always brought me luck.

They can also be taken by still fishing on the reefs or around wrecks. Here, best results are obtained with pinfish or live mullets. The bait should be attached to hooks of 5/0 to 8/0 in size.

Amberjack equipment must be heavy-duty stuff: he is a rod-busting fish. Forty-pounders have already been taken on line of 12-pound test, but to pull a stunt like that, you need the touch of an angler. For the average fisherman who wants spinning equipment that line should be at least 30-pound test and the rod a heavy-duty one. Standard equipment calls for rods with a tip weighing 9 to 12 ounces and 4/0 reels with a heavy wire leader.

Amberjack are not classified as the best eating fish; however,



if they are cleaned soon after capture, and filleted into 5- or 10-pound steaks which are then broiled with butter, they are delicious.

### Barracuda

Barracuda—what more need be said of this fish?—a legend of ferocity. Pirates named their ships after them and folk stories are filled with their violent deeds of ripping man or beast to shreds as they touched water. The stories went so far that the fish virtually became untouchables; it was even said that the flesh of the barracuda was so poisonous it would instantly kill whoever tasted it.

Of course these were exaggerations and resulted in fine meat being discarded; however, today we know better and the fish is now served in many restaurants, though often under disguised names. Stories persist that the meat is poisonous. The truth is that only a minute portion of barracuda has ever made anyone sick, and on the occasions this happened it was the very big fish that were guilty. A big fish may eat something toxic on a reef and his body then retains this toxic substance. Small barracuda and Pacific barracuda are always safe eating.

The great barracuda grows to be a 100-pound sinister monster and is found in the waters of the southern half of Florida along both coasts and along the coast of Texas. Occasionally barracuda will travel as far north as Massachusetts, but mostly they stay near the land of palm trees. Greatest concentrations of them on our shores are in the Florida Keys, the Dry Tortugas, and off the Texas coast. Galveston, near the Claypile and Flower Garden Reefs, is famous for them. The Pacific cuda off the southern California coast is one of the plentiful fish of that area.

The fish's lean body and sinister appearance all give credence to barracuda legends. The long, pikelike silhouette with the protruding lower jaw gives him a look of being all business. But the fiercest thing about a barracuda is his set of dental plates—deadly as a hundred stinging hypodermic needles.

Anyone who has ever fished tropical waters has had experiences with barracuda that prove they are not to be taken casually. We were trolling on the reefs on one trip and hit into some pleasant

action from a school of bonito. Soon I had one on my line. He was small but was putting up a good scrap, when suddenly my line went dead. I waited a second or two and disgustedly began pulling in the line—and then something hit it again. This time he not only got his dinner but even more than he bargained for; he was thoroughly hooked. After a struggle during which my friend did a fancy display of aerial tail dancing, I boated a 22-pound cuda that was still pretty upset about the whole business. What happened to the bonito? It was chewed and ripped beyond recognition, but what interested me was that I would have blamed sharks for this bit of nastiness if I hadn't taken this fish. Barracuda lie in wait behind a school of smaller fish, and when they see a stricken fish they go after it like a shot.

The barracuda ranks as one of the fine game fish of tropical seas. He is a hard hitter that will take off like a runaway torpedo when hooked. Over shallow flats he takes to the air, while offshore it's a fast busy run angling back and forth from the boat. When he is brought into the boat, the angler has to be ready with a gaff (a must in this instance) to bring him aboard. Another handy piece of equipment is a gentle persuader so that he can be clubbed on the head, it makes him more of a gentleman. Remember, however, when a barracuda is landed and he looks as dead as can be, heavy gloves or pliers should be used in removing the hook. Even a gentle nip may lose you a finger.

In California, late spring fishing for the Pacific barracuda causes great excitement at Santa Catalina Island and all along the California coast from Santa Barbara south. The fish on the coast form into large schools and come shoreward ready to spawn. Fishermen all along here get out and troll, bait cast, jig, or still fish live and dead baits for them. A big fish will weigh about 10 pounds, some occasionally going to 15 pounds and up to 4 feet in length. The West Coast barracuda is considered a table delicacy and barracuda steaks make the finest of meals.

Barracuda fishing in Florida is done in the spring of the year when the spawning fish are in straggling schools around river mouths and in bays. They are taken then by shore fishermen from bridges, pilings, or right off the beach, but most fishing at

this time of year is done from small boats. Good inshore fishing lasts through the summer. As the season wears on the bigger fish move offshore onto the reefs and only the small cuda are left.

The inshore cuda in the Gulf will be about 2½ feet in length and weigh 5 pounds or so. They are known for their persistent hunger and are willing strikers at almost anything offered. They take strip-cut fish, live bait, plugs, spoons, or jigs. Sometimes they can be taken on big bass plugs which they eagerly break water to smash at. On a fly rod or a light spinning rod they make for action-packed fifteen minutes to a half hour of fishing. When casting plugs, the angler should keep his plug moving at a rapid clip; these fish like live bait and a fast-moving plug gives that appearance. When trolling, keep the plug or jig out in the wake of the motor, for the fish are not boat-shy and a passing boat only arouses their curiosity.

On the reefs, trolled barracuda jigs or large silver spoons are the standard offshore lures. Mullet, live or strip-cut, as well as yellow-tail and mackerel or any other cut fish, gets them too. They can be fished with a large float, allowing the bottom to ride several feet under water. Live or cut bait is floated out 100 to 150 feet into known barracuda grounds. When the cuda sees this meal, he loses no time in cutting it up for dinner.

Tackle specifications for fishing vary with bay rods, light to medium spinning rods, and fly rods being used inshore for the smaller species. No. 6 to 9 stainless steel wire leader is the most important item on the tackle list; anything else would be sheared instantly by the fish's teeth. Attached to the two to four feet of leader are 4/0 to 8/0 hooks. The reef fish can be taken on medium spinning gear with 12- to 20-pound test line. Farther offshore on the outer reefs where 50-pounders are encountered, I suggest 6/9 outfits with at least 30-pound test line attached. No. 1 to 1/0 barrel swivel and No. 6 to 9 stainless steel leader with 8/0 to 10/0 hooks are necessary. California cuda tackle is medium with 1/0 to 5/0 hooks being used.

The barracuda is quickly becoming everybody's game fish, because he is a specimen sought by tourists and natives alike. He can be fished from bridges, rowboats, or from million-dollar cruisers. They are taken on the reefs, in open water, in mangrove channels,

bays, in kelp beds, and on weedy flats, but no matter where, the barracuda is always an exciting sports fish.

### Bass (Channel)

Channel bass, or redfish, are huge, tough bottom fighters that attain a size of up to 100 pounds. They range from Delaware Bay south to Florida and over into the waters of the Gulf states. This is a big fish that stays on the bottom and cracks oysters with one snap of his jaws. He bores down into the rocks, his favorite habitat, and cuts line like threads. He is a fish that surf casters divorce wives for, and one that pier fishermen dream about—in short, a terrific sports fish.

The really big fish of this species are taken in the North Carolina-Maryland area. The record 83-pounder was caught in 1949 off Cape Charles, Virginia. Among the most famous spots for big ones are Cape Hatteras, Nags Head and Manteo, North Carolina. The big bass in the area show up in March or early April, while surf fishing is good, until June, and then tapers off until September when Oregon Inlet gets active with the big reds again. Other places where the big ones are taken include Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; Assateague Island, Maryland; and at times the famous fishing piers of Virginia Beach provide lunkers.

In the spring, the big bass get to the North Carolina and Virginia coast through the deep waters of the ocean where they start schooling at Cape Hatteras. From there they head north along Oregon Inlet and Virginia Beach on their way to Chesapeake Bay where they stay during the summer. In the fall their trips to the wintering grounds reverses this route. During the migrations along the coast the fish find food relatively scarce and develop a tendency to pounce on any bait offered them.

When food is scarce, bass are the kind of fish that take anything. All kinds of things have been found in their stomachs, including sea birds and water rats. They eat crabs, oysters, clams, mussels, crawfish and other crustacea, as well as all kinds of bait fish. A channel bass isn't a fussy eater but he always likes a good dinner and is constantly on the prowl for it. As long as it looks like a meal

he can be fooled; therefore, plugs, spoons, and metal squids used by a surf caster will bring results.

The name, channel bass, has become so popular that it is universally accepted, even though it is a misnomer, for these fish are not members of the bass family, but of the croaker family. In the deep South and the Gulf states the name for this species is redfish. Redfish is probably a better name, because of his coppery color, even though his color may not always be prominent. Some of the species show no copper at all, but are a grayish silver. The fish can easily be identified by a spot near above the tail, just where the tail fin begins.

Channel bass and other members of the croaker family are fish that can actually make noise—a croaking sound made with their throat plates which are used for food grinding. During World War II, these fish schooled up outside Chesapeake Bay and they drove the Navy boys daffy with their sonar equipment. More than one depth bomb brought home a big school of bass.

The fish are taken on this coast by the surf caster on the beach, who throws his line out just beyond the breakers. Here the big pigs (channel bass over 40 pounds) lurk in search of food, and if it is the angler's day one of them will come down and mouth the calico or blue-claw crab bait. It is in these early moments of what could be a memorable experience when knowledge of channel bass fishing is most important. Let a bass take the bait. He generally starts off by merely playing with a bait and mouthing it. Wait until he takes it and starts to run with it—only then should the line be struck. If it's a big one, you'll swear you hooked a submarine as he starts to bear down against the line. If the equipment is light and the drag is set too tight, the line will snap like dime-store twine, for a bass exerts continuous pressure. Six to 18 linen thread line is suggested, with strong 4-ply gut or No. 8 or 9 stainless steel leader to ensure a good chance of keeping a big one.

Fights last well over an hour at times, especially when the big fish swims into a hole and stubbornly refuses to budge. You don't horse this fish for the simple reason he can't be horsed; must be guided and fought up. When he gets near the beach be ready with the gaff, because too many fishermen have gone home empty-

handed when they had one within a few feet of home. Every once in a while an angler will catch a channel bass that follows the hook in like a docile sheep. I think this happens when they don't realize it, for I have seen them led in almost all the way, suddenly to wake up and make a crash dive.

A surf-casting rod with a 6-foot tip weighing 8 to 15 ounces, with a 30-inch spring butt, is popular. Reels are 2/0 or 3/0 with at least 200 yards of 6- to 18-thread line making up the outfit. Spinning rods of the heavy-duty variety are also popular equipment for these big ones, down here on monster row in North Carolina.

In Florida and throughout the Gulf states, redfish are generally smaller and are fished by different methods. Around the Gulf, 20-pounders are an extreme rarity. The average fish will probably weigh only 3 or 4 pounds. Throughout the Atlantic side of Florida and farther north along the coast to South Carolina they are slightly larger than on the Gulf; still they are not as large as the big ones that come off the North Carolina coast.

Down here it is almost like writing about another fish. In fact, some natives don't even associate channel bass with their popular redfish. Here they are taken on medium spinning gear or medium standard gear. Enough sinker should be used to hold bottom, and wire leader is almost a must because sharks often rip at the bait. No. 5/0 to 8/0 hooks are used. Reds are present in the Southern waters all year, but fishing is rather lean during the summer months when they move offshore. The best fishing in the Gulf is from October until March of the following year when they are in close. During a cool spell, some will even go into fresh water.

It is interesting to note that in the fall good fishing begins in the South just as it is ending farther north.

The reds are not only surf-fishes, but are taken by bridge fishing, and many are caught by boat fishermen. The fish like mangroves and pilings where they make excellent targets for the spin boys. A weighted bucktail, moved along in a jerky fashion, often brings a harvest. Small spinning spoons and plugs also get them; and if they are on the surface after mullet, a top plug works fine. Other times, pinfish, sand bream, or mullet are the baits to use down here. Hook

the bait fish through the back so that they stay alive longer, for reds like live bait. A shrimp makes an excellent bait and it should be hooked behind the head; redfish seem to have a habit of taking a bait headfirst.

The best time to get them is on a high tide when they are feeding in close. A good trick to remember is to go after channel bass right after a big storm or a hurricane, when the bottom has been stirred up and the fish are ready to take anything that may come along.

These fish are very often taken from boats, especially in the summer months when their deep, cool holes are sought out. From the boats they can be taken by trolling just beyond the breaker line, or they can be taken by anchoring over a rocky bottom and lowering the line to them. For this type of fishing an assortment of natural baits gets results.

Channel bass spawn in the fall. The eggs drift into the inland waters where they hatch. The young fish will stay in these waters and seek out grassy bottoms or weeds for protection. During the first winter the fish are still inshore and are several inches in length. In the spring many of the young fish head out to sea while the remainder stay in close to shore.

The young reds are called puppy drum while they weigh under 5 pounds. These smaller fish are taken inshore by all kinds of anglers with every type of equipment. They are a very popular sports fish all the way from Maryland and throughout the Gulf. The small ones are considered best eating; in many sections of the South, puppy drum are a chief ingredient in fish chowder. In many places the fish are numerous and it is not unusual to take twenty to fifty a day. The heavy pressure on these fish would seem to hurt the redfish population, but actually not, for young fish are not spawners. Only large fish of 20 pounds or more spawn; so that sportsman taking the big ones should have conservation in his mind: it's the big ones that generate the fighting channel bass.

### **Bass (Sea)**

A sea bass by any other name is still a sea bass and as far as I know there isn't another fish with so many aliases. They include:

black will, blackfish, bass, black herry, hannabal, black perch, rockfish, rock bass, tallywog, and scores of other names. Humpback is another one, but at least this one is descriptive, since the males develop a peculiar lump on their back.

Sea bass are caught in bays and tidal water all the way along the East Coast from Florida to Maine. The biggest of the species remain out on the ocean floor but smaller members of the tribe come in. These are called pin bass, and every pier and rowboat fisherman knows them. The fish caught inshore run from  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds and during the months of June to September seem in endless supply in almost any bay and inlet from Chesapeake Bay to Cape Cod.

These fish mingle with their buddies the porgies, and together they are the mainstay of summer fishing along the New Jersey and New York shore. The small ones keep the inshore fishermen active while just offshore bottom fishermen can always count on bringing home a mess of good-sized bass. In the summer when all other fishing is slow the sea bass is a friend in need.

Sea bass can also be taken off the Carolina coast throughout the winter months. They are found in this area in such astronomical numbers that it is said the annual bluefish migration is often slowed up several weeks while the blues tear into Carolina bass. It is not a difficult task to catch sea bass; in fact, some fishermen say it is actually difficult *not* to catch them. They make statements like this after their blood pressure skyrockets from having sea bass take over the grass-shrimp chum lines that were put down especially for weakfish.

The bass live on the bottom eating mussels, barnacles, shrimp, crabs, sea worms, and anything else obtainable. Like other bottom fish they are coarse and have a tough hide, so necessary for fish that socialize around barnacle rocks. Their mouths are big and tough, and because of that, once one is hooked, he generally doesn't get off.

Their color is black or sometimes indigo, matching him to the dark sea bottom where he stays. The dorsal fin is extremely sharp and can inflict a nasty cut if handled carelessly. A precaution in



taking them off a hook is to seize them with a rag, or, if bare-handed, grab them by the lower jaw.

A sure way to take bass is with a chum pot. Regular mossbunker or crushed clams in the pot attracts them, and by dropping the line close to the pot it creates one of the surest bets in fishing. In his situation the angler is almost certain to hook a sack. The best places to chum is on a rocky bottom, near a wreck, piling, or other known bass feeding grounds.

In fishing for sea bass, don't strike the line at the first slight tug; wait for the hard one. Thus you are sure to hook the culprit. If out for sport, light equipment is a must in the bay, where fish run under a pound. A weakfish rod with a sinker that holds bottom and two sproat hooks size No. 4 to 2/0 make up an excellent outfit. The hooks should be tied above the sinker, to ride above the bottom. For offshore fishing for 3- to 5-pounders, the same methods are used except with hooks up to 5/0 and 16-ounce sinkers at times.

Sea bass baits include clams, shrimps, shedder crab, cut fish, worms, bloodworms and live killies.

These East Coast sea bass are not glamor boys. The largest ever caught was an 8-pounder taken off Nantucket Island. Compared with other members of the grouper family, the jewfish of the south, or the various sea bass of the West Coast, he seems puny, but to the army of fishermen who go after him every summer he provides lots of fun and good chowder.

### Bass (Striped)

To tell the story of striped bass in America is to tell the story of surf fishing, for no other fish even remotely rates with the striper in popularity. It is the surfer's delight. Fishermen line up all along the rocky shores of both our coasts, casting an assortment of lures and baits during all hours of the day and night in the unquenchable hope of landing a 60- or 70-pounder.

Striped bass run that big and bigger; some species caught commercially weigh 100 pounds or more. Charles Church, on August 17, 1913, caught a 73-pounder in Vineyard Sound, Massachusetts, which still is the world record. Sixty-pounders are caught just

regularly enough to tempt all of us, but these big ones are hard to catch and it sometimes takes a lifetime of experimenting and hoping before you get one.

Most striped bass weigh anywhere from 2 to 5 pounds, and even then they are quite a fish. They are taken practically all along both coastlines. In the Pacific, they range from Oregon down to southern California, with that rugged coast affording excellent fishing in such spots as Coos Bay and San Francisco Bay. In the East, stripers are found the whole length of the coast; sometimes they are even caught in the Gulf. The center of all striper activity is Chesapeake Bay, their chief spawning ground. Some spawn in the Hudson River, in Delaware Bay, and in most of the bays and rivers on the coast. But fishing activity in these areas is to a great extent for the migratory fish which begin their run from Chesapeake Bay in April.

The fish work their way north, never venturing far from shore. As they migrate they feed on small bait fish or scurry along the bottom looking for worms and crustaceans. A good point to remember in early season fishing, April to late May, is to know where the low-water mark of a tide is, because this is where most worms are found. Off the average beach, a cast of 50 to 100 feet would bring your hooks right out to this pay-dirt area.

Stripers are the most fickle of all salt-water fish. Even when they are on a feeding binge they are choosy as to what they will strike. During the times when they are not feeding, a fillet mignon served on a silver platter wouldn't tempt them. Once, when I was fishing in a bay, which from past reports I knew to be loaded, I got nary a strike—in fact I didn't even get a look-see. I was fishing from a boat and was beginning to think about calling it a day when matters were made worse by three boatloads of hot rods on water skis that came buzzing around my area. I kept fishing, figuring I couldn't do any worse than I had been doing, when suddenly I had a smash at my eelskin. After a good tussle I pulled in a 7-pounder, and in a little while—with my friends the water skiers still about, I hauled in another one. Of course, I am not suggesting that you hire a speedboat to go stirring up a favorite spot; generally motor noises disturb the fish; but it does illustrate that bass are

more inclined to feed when the water is stirred up and moving. After you have fished for them awhile you appreciate that cold spring wind that stirs the surf into white caps, because then you'll know what makes excellent striped bass fishing conditions.

Striper fishing is extremely varied in its approach. It is probably the only kind of fishing in which the shore fishermen outnumber the boating fishermen; even among the former, methods vary with each type of location.

The most popular way is by surf casting a line 50 to 150 feet into the ocean. High spots are Montauk Point, the Jersey beaches, Cape Cod, or anywhere along the California coast. In these spots bass can run right up to the legendary 70 pounds, and the equipment has to be geared accordingly. A number 6/0 O'Shaughnessy hook is about the perfect size, but of course some fishermen vary the hook a size or two either way. The hook is attached by strong gut or stainless steel leader to at least 200 to 300 yards of 9- to 15-thread linen line. To hold all this on the bottom where it will do most good, a 5- to 8-ounce pyramid sinker is used in heavy (good bass fishing) surfs. For lighter surfs sometimes a 3-ounce sinker will suffice. Reels are of the utmost importance. A star drag is best and sometimes the only way to check a big bass's hard run. Expert bass fishermen may not agree, knowing they can be broken in other ways. But for the average or beginning fisherman, it is a necessity in fighting the big ones.

When baiting up for surf casting, it is wise to remember one basic fact about all bass: they are hogs, and like big baits on a hook. Stripers will take marine worms, sand eels, eels, shedder crabs, a few kinds of jellyfish, squid, shrimp, mullet, herring, menhaden, or any small fish including sardines (a very popular and productive Pacific bait).

So far, it sounds easy, but the really frustrating thing about stripers is that when they are on a jag for a specific bait they will generally hit absolutely nothing else. If they are on a small-fish binge, that's what they'll hit, even though the week before they may have gorged themselves on these baits. A ton of squid during the small-fish binge would be rewarded with the iciest stare since the time someone mentioned sex to Garbo.

Bass usually take worms in April and into May. At least two large bloodworms should be used. Make sure the entire hook is covered; also, a sizable trailing piece will help. As the summer progresses, a strip of squid 4 to 6 inches long and trailing may be to their liking; or maybe shedder crab, which should be tied to the hook with a little thread. Later in the season, as the hot weather sets in, skinner clams sometimes become the bait *du jour*. Then again, strips of bait fish or a whole fish can often coax a strike throughout most of the year. Two good rules for baiting for stripers are:

1. Try worms in the spring, and
2. Experiment!

On the same shore two schools of fishermen mingle freely: the natural-bait boys and those who prefer the artificials. Those who prefer the lures can usually be told from the natural-bait society of fishermen by their lighter equipment.

Plugs made for striper fishing number in the thousands, but basically there are two kinds: (1) surface plugs and (2) subsurface plugs, which include the various spoons. There are, of course, hundreds of variations of each, some falling between the two categories by being a combination of both.

Of the surface plugs, I favor those of the popping variety, which, when moved properly, behave like an injured fish. This kind will usually draw a strike during the times when bass are feeding on bait fish. A popping-type surface plug should be retrieved so as to look like an injured fish, which means you should vary the speed and keep the plug coming in slowly. The propeller plugs are designed to look like a bait fish in the water, so keep moving it to get action.

Subsurface plugs work best in the evening when their wobbling and diving, which is their main activity, create a commotion that lures bass to their doom. Many spin fishermen use this kind of plug, and some made for stripers weigh as little as 2 ounces. These plugs should be worked at about the same speed but possibly a trifle faster than the surface plug.

A plug is hitched to a line in the same manner that bait is, except

that it is all-important to include a swivel. This allows the free action necessary to make a plug effective. Plug fishing is generally much more effective during the summer than in the spring, when the fish hug bottom. I don't start plugging until late in July.

Some night during the fall, when the eel runs start, bass will turn to feeding on these meaty fish. On such nights an eel rig will work wonders. Some fishermen shy away from eel rigs because they are messy to make, but actually they are quite simple to construct. Take an eel about a foot long, and with a needle attach some strong nylon line to it, then insert the needle into the eel's body two inches from the tail. Run the needle and line completely through the eel's body and out through its mouth. Tie a hook to the end of the line and pull the shank of the hook into the eel's body. Now take the needle and run it through a swivel and then back into the eel's mouth and into the body, down to a point about three inches from the head, where it should come out of the eel again. Here, tie on the second hook and pull its shank into the eel's body by tightening the line around the swivel. Secure it by tying. To make sure the eel stays near the bottom where it does most good, a narrow, thick piece of lead can be wrapped around the eel's head. The whole device should be tied together neatly to complete the rig.

Eelskins are popular baits too. These can be bought, and all the fisherman has to do is attach the skin to a metal squid with an eel-skin ring on it. This lure must be kept moving so that the hollow eelskin is kept filled with the onrushing water and will appear real. Eels and eelskins are most productive at night.

One thing that really annoys me is the striper's habit of being a specialist at night feeding. This night-feeding habit is important to the shore fisherman because of the striper's other habit of venturing closer to shore at night. Night-fishing habits are prevalent among many fish because plankton and algae rise to the surface after dark and small bait fish come up to feed on it. Worms tend to come out more at night, and eels are most active then; so it stands to reason that bass, which enjoy bait fish, eels and worms, find hunting best after dark.

I must say I often enjoy night fishing. A cool beach on a summer night is a really delightful and beautiful place. But during the

late- and early-season fishing, those chilly nights in the spray can try a man's soul. However, when you hit into a big one all discomforts are forgotten in the ensuing battle.

Not all fishermen agree that the nighttime is best for striped bass. Many hold that daytime is just as good. From my own experience I must conclude that I do better at night than during the day, and therefore will continue to do my striped bass fishing from dusk to dawn. I have always been just a little suspicious of the daytime boys. No doubt they catch fish, but I think they like daytime fishing because they prefer a warm bed at night.

There is only one other matter to consider: the tides. As with practically all bay and shoreline fish, an incoming tide is most productive for the angler. The very best time is from when the tide is about halfway in to about an hour after high tide. Beyond that, there is generally a sharp drop in fishing activity until the tide starts in again.

When surf casting, load up with lots of hooks and bait; experiment with various kind of baits; fish in an active surf; fish each season according to its demands; and fish at night on an incoming tide. The more of these things you have in your favor the better your chances are.

In recent years one phase of surf casting that has become more and more popular is spin fishing. Before very long, I believe that spin fishermen will outnumber those who prefer the traditional surf rod. Spinning offers several important advantages. Practically anyone, without much practice, can cast great distances without having to worry about backlashes, which are almost nonexistent with spinning equipment. Spinning rods are lighter than surf rods because of their glass, hollow, or solid construction, which makes fishing less tedious, and for this reason they are excellent equipment for women who like to try their hand at surf fishing.

Striped bass are taken not only in roaring surf but also in the inland water of the coasts. The bass will enter almost all the bays and rivers along the coast and often venture far upstream. In the Hudson River, striped bass fishing goes on all the way up to Bear Mountain, a good fifty miles from the mouth of the river. In inland bays and rivers such as the Susquehanna, and the Connecticut

rivers striper fishing is very similar to surf fishing, the only difference being that lighter equipment is used. Lighter sinkers hold the bait down, for you generally buck a current that is much weaker than a surf undertow.

Many of the inland spots are dotted with sharp rocks and crags. A trick to keep from losing too many rigs is to tie a small piece of cork onto the line just above the hook. This floats the hook just above the bottom and out of reach of a thousand likely snags. A corked hook saves lots of rigs in a sport that can really chew up equipment.

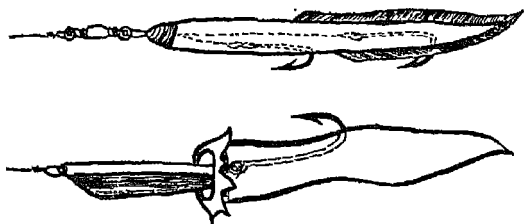
Stripers often run right up into the grassy creeks that surround the bays. Although it is usually the smaller specimens that run here, large ones do come up. When fishing for bass this far in-shore, very light equipment is used because bass tend to feed near the surface.

Fly rods are fun and shrimp, shedder, a killie, a worm, or a piece of crab is used for bait. No sinker is necessary unless the current is too heavy. The bait works best if it is floated to the fish far down the current. A hit here and you are in for some fun because your prey takes off downsteam, cross-stream, and back again. Other times he tries to shake the hook loose by smashing the line on any debris he may find on the bottom—even a 2-pounder is terrific in this setup.

Year after year, more large bass are taken by trolling than by any other means. Trolling can be terrific sport. The way I like it is to get together with a friend and get a small shallow-draft boat with a good kicker. Then we maneuver the boat as close to the rocks as we possibly can. We work in close, not to kill ourselves, but to take advantage of the boat and get to all the good bass spots we can. In a heavy surf, working in close can be exciting. The boat should move along about three to five miles an hour and the baits should drag 150 feet to the stern. As for baits, use artificials or naturals—both work well. Some like to use spoons, while others prefer poppers, feathers, or live baits for trolling. The choice is yours, but keep experimenting until you get the right one for the day. Above all, keep the bait moving. What makes trolling so

productive is that you can look for bass and don't have to wait for the fish to come to you.

No matter how you fish for stripers, they're always great sport. In the future, just as now, there won't be another inshore fish hunted as relentlessly as the striper. And no wonder, because he meets all the requirements for good sport. He is available adjacent to metropolitan areas on both coasts; he is an inshore fish easily accessible; he is a good fighter and an excellent food fish.



TOP: A *rigged eel*. BOTTOM: An *eelskin rig*.

Stripers are prolific breeders. A female sometimes produces 1,500,000 eggs. The kind of fishing pressure exerted on these fish is sure to wear down the supply. Already big inroads have been made on the size of those taken. If you read historical data, the catches discussed are always of much larger fish than those caught today. So be a sportsman and take only what you need. The one you release today may be a record-breaker tomorrow.

### Blackfish

With his fins creating a headdress, it's no wonder New Englanders call this fish by his Indian name—*tautog*. They love this big, rough bottom fish. Every New England fish chowder has a special place on its list of ingredients for the sweet-flavored meat. Farther south, from New York on down to Virginia, the fish is called by its more common name, blackfish, for the brown-black color of his skin.

Blacks are bottom fish that like rough, rocky bottoms full of deep



crag and ledges. The coarser the bottom the more to his liking; in fact, he is a fish that enjoys life on the ocean floor so much that he spends half his time standing on his head to prove it. The fish isn't a yogi trying to relax his muscles, but one that has learned this posture through necessity; for swimming vertically enables him to move through the rock crevices much more deftly. In his domain horizontal motion is often blocked by jagged rocks, whereas the swift vertical action gets him instantly down to an unsuspecting dinner.

The blacks feed off the bottom where they eat almost anything within reach. They are fond of all the tempting tidbits found there, including oysters, clams, mussels, crabs, worms, shrimp, and small lobsters.

The tautog is not only different in his ways of approaching food but he takes it in an unorthodox manner that can drive an unwary fisherman to drink. First, the fish comes in and only feels at what he wants to eat, nibbling in an exasperating manner with his conical front teeth. If the fish likes what he finds he moves the morsel back into his mouth to his molars. These teeth are the kind that make dentists wince, for they can split oyster shells with one chomp or, similarly, dissipate a crab or a lobster.

The important thing for fishermen to remember is never to strike the line on a black's first hit because it only means a missed fish. Patience is the byword—wait for the fish to give a hard pull indicating he has the bait back in his mouth and really means business—then strike and be ready to tug.

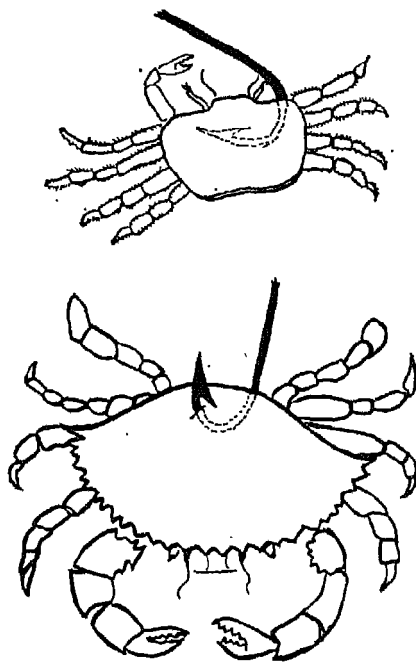
When the blacks feed they don't wander over the bottom looking for food. Instead they find a small area they like and stay there. Here they set up shop and anything that comes near them quickly becomes Mr. Tautog's dinner. For the fisherman this means he must keep moving until he locates a spot where they are. Sometimes moving only a few feet either way may spell the difference between a full creel and an empty one.

The blacks love to get in around wrecks and reefs wherever barnacles get a chance to cling. On a rocky bottom they are generally found on the lee side of the rocks away from a running tide. In inshore waters they feed on the edges of steep banks. A deep

hole in an inshore creek is a hot spot for big ones. The best time for blackfishing is the last two hours of an incoming tide, which lasts until about an hour beyond high tide.

The fish go up to about 20 pounds in size with the record—a 21-pounder caught off Rhode Island. The average fish weighs 3 to 4 pounds and many in the 6- to 8-pound class come in regularly from the good deep-water spots.

Blackfishing begins with the first sign of warm weather in April when they come in from their hibernation in the deep water. Early in the spring is their spawning time and then they are suckers for clams. They probably like the soft bait because they have so many



TOP: *Hooking up a fiddler crab.* Break off the large claw and insert the hook there. BOTTOM: *Hooking up a hard crab.* Often the claws of a crab are broken off.

other things on their mind and can't be bothered thinking of food. Blacks stay inshore all summer and are within reach of the angler until winter, when the water temperature drops below 50 degrees; then they move off to deep water. Throughout the year they will readily take fiddler crabs and worms, except during July and August when nothing seem to interest them.

Tell a tackle-shop proprietor you're going for blackfish and watch him smile. The kind of fishing required to get blacks really eats up tackle; often it is merely a pastime of getting snagged and unsnagged. When I fish for them in very rough terrain, I often use only one hook, for it increases chances of coming up with a hook. The rig used is simply a sinker heavy enough to hold bottom, a swivel with a hook tied to it. Hooks depend on the kind of fishing; for bay fishing a Virginia No. 1 or 2/0 is fine, while offshore No. 2/0 to 8/0 hooks are used, depending upon the size of the fish. The angler soon finds that his sinker snags more often than the hook; therefore, some anglers tie sinkers on with light test line on the theory that at least the hook will be saved.

Rods are generally sturdy bay rods; the fish have a good strong pull, and with the heavy sinkers this equipment has proved best.

### Bluefish

The mere mention of the word bluefish brings to mind those exciting moments when two, three, or four of them are on lines and thrashing madly. They dart back and forth, shaking and bucking while running furiously in every direction, getting the anglers' lines crossed and recrossed in the mad scramble. This pandemonium may last until the angler gets arm weary from bringing them in. At other times, at the height of action, the school suddenly disappears.

Bluefish are the unpredictable gypsies of the seven seas. They are apt to turn up anywhere in the Atlantic or Indian ocean, wherever the water stays above 40 degrees. They are abundant throughout the Gulf, and vast schools travel as far north as Cape Cod. The best times for them depend on the area. In the Gulf, from Texas to Florida, they are present in the spring from April to

June, while along the Florida coast the best fishing is in April and again in September. From the Carolinas to Delaware, May to August is most productive while New Jersey, New York, and southern Massachusetts will get them from July to September. If it pleases bluefish they turn up in a given area at a given time. If not, they don't show up at all. During the famous bluefish famine of 1938-1949 there never were enough blues around to bother with at any time and it wasn't until 1951 that they really made their gigantic comeback.

One theory about the erratic behavior of the blues is that they'll migrate when they've exhausted the supply of bait fish in an area. Their absence for several years gives the bait fish a chance to restock themselves.

Bluefish are not common to the Pacific and many anglers have suggested transplanting some to see how they would take. This usually brings a loud scream from the West Coast salmon men, who fear these marauding killers could destroy their beloved salmon. They have reason for their fear too, for bluefish kill and kill and kill, sometimes just for the love of it. They will attack a school of bait fish and destroy it, and when they are too full to gorge themselves on another bite, they merely kill fish and leave them. When they hit fish too big to swallow they only rip off a piece of flesh and leave the rest. These fish are constantly hungry; they eat until they regurgitate and then start again. Any unfortunate menhaden, butterfish, small mackerel or other bait fish they attack are ripped to shreds in seconds. Gulls love to follow the bluefish schools for they can swoop down and grab whatever the blues leave.

Bluefish are sports fish from the day they are born. When they are only a few months old and only 6 to 7 inches long they are already wildly sought by anglers. Snappers, as the young blues are called, are fished all along the inshore waters of the coast where bluefish venture. They travel in schools all about the bays. When the tide is in they'll run up creeks, and fishermen can be seen hunting them wherever there is a bend in the creek. Here in the lee of the bank they lie in wait of the fish that get caught in the currents and come down to them. When searching out snappers on inshore

creeks or rivers, locate a spot right after a section of really fast water and you can bet the young blues are there waiting.

These small snappers are first fished when they are 6 or 7 inches in length and weigh less than a half pound. They grow fast, and before another two months go by they will be  $\frac{3}{4}$  to a pound in weight and 10 to 14 inches in length. They are taken by shore fishermen, on jetties, piers and from rowboats. The fish are the pets of pier fishermen because they continually give them the action they crave. Schools of snappers have a tendency to stay around piers because bait fish congregate there. Microscopic marine life grows at piers just as it does from reefs and this is what the bait fish want. Pier fishermen would do well to remember that the small blues generally stay where the water is at least 10 feet deep during low tide. They like a fast current.

The best fishing time takes place from two hours before a high tide and lasts until two hours after high tide. To catch them, equipment should be light because of their small size. Start with a No. 3 Carlisle hook attached to strong gut leader for the small ones; for the bigger 1-pounders a 1/0 hook is good. The fish are usually within a few feet of the surface, therefore three feet of the line below the surface is plenty. As for pier fishermen and others, it is often worthwhile to tie a float to the line. This readily advertises what is going on below. Fishing from a boat eliminates the need of a float because the closeness to the prey easily tells of any activity. Bait-casting rods, fly rods, or light spinning rods are excellent for snappers; with this gear their vicious attack is fully appreciated. Traditional cane poles are fun too, excellent for children because of their ease of handling.

To keep blues near a boat, a bucket of mossbunker slowly developing a chum line brings them in and keeps them there. When fishing in a chum line, a small piece of chum on a hook is deadly. Spearing, killies, or any other small fish also attract these small snappers to a hook. Spearing, the most common bait, cannot be kept alive on a hook and are fished dead, but if minnows are used live ones are best. Strips of cut snapper belly also make an attractive bait.

Bait fish can be put on a hook in several different ways. The

simplest way is to attach a spearing by running the hook through the fish's mouth and body, bringing it up through the back halfway down. The reverse of this procedure works well too—start by inserting the hook into the back down near the tail of a spearing and then bring it forward through the body and out of the back, halfway through the body. Live killies are hooked through the mouth so that they'll stay live longer.

Snappers are especially good fish to start a young boy's fishing experiences with. They are taken inshore and can be caught from fishing piers where parents need have no apprehension about sending children. The fish attack bait and are therefore easy to hook; any youngster who watches his float will certainly catch one. I can recall my first snapper—it was at New Haven, Connecticut, and I was so excited I ran all the way home gripping my prize as if he were gold. I made my mother fry him then and there.

During September and into October snappers will be somewhat bigger and they then are known as snapper blues. At this time they weigh slightly under a pound. Everything else about them is just the same except now they seem to enjoy using that extra weight in attacking bait fish and lines.

If snapper and snapper bluefishing creates excitement, regular bluefishing is pandemonium. Big fish weighing 2 to 15 pounds patrol our coasts in schools that are so thick they measure a mile or more in length. The activity in these schools is so frantic that the fish will churn the water like a northeastern wind. They will attack anything that swims and if they can't eat it they kill it just for the joy of it. There was at least one incident in 1956 where a large bluefish actually attacked and bit a swimmer, but this is rare. For the most part they have sense enough to leave man alone and concentrate on destroying all fish life in the ocean.

Blues will go up to 25 pounds in weight and the record catch was a 24 pounds, 3 ounces, taken in the Azores. The largest I know taken on rod and reel in America was a 20 pounder taken at Montauk Point, N.Y.

The large blues generally do not come into the bay but are taken in open water by one of three methods: trolling, chumming, or jigging. Trolling is a tried and proven method that brings results

if there are fish about. Set the speed of a charter or private boat at 3 to 5 miles an hour and begin moving where they lurk. Look for their signs—churning water, bait fish leaping, crying gulls—and move the boat in close to the areas where you see the signs. A sure sign of bluefish is when the water smells like cucumbers; this is caused by undigested plankton and other sea food often regurgitated by the marauding killers.

When a school is located, troll only at the edges, because a reckless drive through the middle of it can make these killers wary and dive for deep water. By trolling the edges, anglers can often pick out thirty or forty fish without even disturbing their feeding. If schools can't be located don't be discouraged, for the fish are sometimes under the water and are readily taken there.

For this kind of trolling keep the lures from 75 to 175 feet away from the boat. Try red or white feathered jigs, sinker-like spoons, spinners, eelskin rig, or any other kind of bright or shiny lure. Large plugs trolled through the ocean will bring them too. Don't use bright brass swivels when trolling, because the blues often will hit them and I've never seen a blue caught on a swivel. The swivel should be a two-way barrel swivel which should connect at least 5 feet of No. 6 steel wire leader to the lure.

Medium rods with 5 to 6 foot tip can be used, to which a 2/0 reel is attached holding a minimum of 150 yards of 30-pound test line. Using heavy or medium-duty spinning gear with monofilament line of 20-pound test will bring them in too. For the expert who wants to be sporty, a medium spinning rod and 12-pound test line will really try his ability. Deep trolling is done with weighted lure on monel wire line.

The other popular method of fishing is to work up a chum line to bring the fish in close to a stationary boat. Ground-up moss-bunker has become the almost standard chum, but of ground mackerel or any other oily, fishy substance works well. A chum line has to be a steady line so the fish get a taste of the stuff and follow it in to the source. If the line is broken the fish are confused and don't know where go. A word of fishing etiquette: Never cut through someone's chum line. This cuts the line and confuses the fish. Several years ago there was person who persisted in trolling

in other captains' chum lines. This went on until one captain got so angry he unloaded a shotgun into the pirate's hull. The Coast Guard restored the peace, but the feeling among fishermen is that such thieves are no better than highway robbers—and highway robbers have traditionally been shot.

Anglers should fish a slack line a short distance away from the boat. His hook and O'Shaughnessy 5/0 or 8/0 should be baited with strip-cut fish or a mullet 4 or 5 inches in length. Another good bait is shedder crab. A jig thrown out at them from a reasonably empty boat will bring hits on the retrieve. A word of caution about chumming: Don't forget to keep chum going, especially with blues around. More than one angler has lost a school that was in his hip pocket because he forgot to keep the chum going. Blues can move off awfully fast.

Bluefish are soft-fleshed, and when they are taken with their bellies chock full of soft mossbunker, they should be cleaned at the first opportunity. Bluefish are delicious meat: immediate cleaning and icing preserves their succulent ocean flavor. Surf casters can bury their catch in the cool wet sand until ready to go home.

Bait fishermen may often get a second chance at a missed blue. A fish sometimes hits a line and is missed, if the line is loosened immediately, there is a good chance he may hit again. Blues will turn if they think they missed something edible or killable and attack it just as viciously a second time. In order to fight them, a tight line is necessary. Keep it tight all the way, because if you give a blue a chance he can spit a hook fifteen yards. They are as crafty as they are wild.

Catching blues in the surf is a real joy. In the areas where they are regularly taken from the surf there are always faithful beach men waiting for their arrival with incoming tide. Not all beaches are good for blues. In fact, most of them give up blues only on rare occasions when a wandering school comes in. But the sort of places where blues can ordinarily be caught is where swift water runs near shore. The channels between the mainland and an island where the tide rushes through, a rip which connects two large bodies of water, or through which bay water flows to the ocean, all are good bets. Inshore bluefish often are not attached



to a school but are loners hiding in rocks or fast water, looking for prey. These inshore fish are reminiscent of the lonely barracuda, who stalk and wait for food to come close by.

Surfmen hit the schools too, but most of the school stay too far offshore and only with the best spinning equipment can the surf caster ever hope to reach the edges of a nearby school. Every surf caster dreams of the day when they come right into the breaker point, chasing menhaden.

I was once fishing the south shore of Massachusetts for an early run of stripers and the action was slow. I noticed a flock of gulls swooping in great excitement. I immediately climbed a bunker behind the beach to get a better look. The water was churning. I grabbed my pole, tore off the bait, and with trembling hands attached a jig. Then I lit out for the spot, half a mile down the beach. By the time I got there, two other fishermen were already there, for it didn't take much scientific knowledge to read that neon light of the sea. We took our positions, and I tried to cast my jig out to them. But it was no use—they were still out of reach. The bait fish out there were in a frenzy and they followed their instinct and rushed for shore, with the blues hot on their tails.

My jig hit the water right in front of the school and I started reeling in when one smashed it like a small horse. He bucked and fought, but I hurried him in and threw him onto the beach, anxious to cast again. The same thing happened—my line hardly hit the water when it was jarred. The second one was brought in too, and again and again it happened. A full twenty minutes this went on, until I cast, reeled my jig completely in, but this time nothing happened. The gulls were still greedily picking up the pieces of menhaden, but even they were slowing up. It was apparent the blues had moved off. I counted my fish; I had an even dozen all in the 3- to 5-pound class. I saw that my fellow fishermen had equally as many—all in all about fifty blues were taken from that beach in less than a half hour. What a day!

Those short bursts of frenzy are the hope of every fisherman. Usually blues come the hard way, the one-at-a-time way. But no matter how blues are taken, they're all sports fish and I will always

join the boatmen in saying a little prayer that they will come back again next year.

### Bonefish

When bonefish (the gray ghost) are feeding on a flat some thirty yards in front of you and it's your turn to float a small yellow bucktail to them, then you realize you're fishing for a prey warier than a pickpocket at a cops' picnic. Deftly you toss out the weighted fly (shotged down) and it lands in the water just a few yards in front of the gray ghost of the sand bars. You hold your breath, hoping the fly didn't make too much of a ripple, for he will streak away if it did. But luck prevails and ever so lightly one strikes it. You wait half a second and set the hook. In the next instant he streaks for deep water. A hundred and fifty yards of line rip wildly off your reel as the fish makes his desperate flight for freedom.

He is solidly hooked and his first run for deep water doesn't break the line. At the end of the run, when he realizes the hook is still there, he takes off in another direction. It's run after run, and your fly rod bends from the strain of each succeeding rush as line flies off the reel, while at other times you desperately fight sudden slack. Every muscle in your body is tensed and every brain cell is busy in the struggle with this gamester. After a half an hour of unremitting battle he finally comes in completely spent. He flips only occasionally now—a tribute to his courage, for he is all but dead from the terrific fight. He lies sickly on his side.

You reach down for the long, thin, silver-blue fish. As you gently dislodge the hook you notice his long scales. In your hand, he weighs about 7 pounds. Then gently you put him down in the two feet of water and release him. He swims off a few yards, wobbly and listing. He rests a moment, hardly believing he can go as he pleases, then spurts off for deep water and the freedom he so desperately fought for.

I have kept one bonefish—my first—a 6-pounder, which I mounted. They are edible but bony, and don't rate in flavor with the many other fish. They are hunted for sport alone, and sports-

men have an unwritten rule that bonefish should be released unless kept for a special purpose.

Although bonefish are sometimes caught as far north as Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, they are found in abundance in southern California, and southern Florida, where Key Largo is a kind of bonefishing headquarters. Considering the fact that the fish are restricted to such a limited area (they are a tropical fish, abundant around the Caribbean islands and the Hawaiian Islands) it is a tribute to their qualities as game fish that they are regarded so highly here.

The most fascinating way to fish for them, I found, is to wade quietly out on the flats and sand bars, flipping an assortment of flies to them. If an angler makes like Mother Hubbard in a bathtub while wading, his catch will be limited to a sunburn. Silent stalking ability is of the utmost importance in bonefishing. They are the most wary of all salt-water fish, because they feed in the low, shallow flats where they are wide open to attack by birds and other fish. Nature, in taking care of its own, has given these fish a keen sense of danger and the ability to get out in a hurry when something is amiss.

Professional bonefish guides greatly help a novice's chances of making a catch; they know where the fish are most likely to be feeding and at what times. A guide can also help by poling an angler around to the fishes' haunts in a flat-bottom boat, thus eliminating to a great extent the sort of blunders that empty whole sand bars in seconds.

Whether fishing by wading or by poling, certain facts about bonefish feeding habits should be known. They feed on the flats and sand bars in as little as one or two feet of water. They are bottom feeders along these flats and can generally be found digging in the mud for crustaceans and other food. As they feed they often kick up telltale spots of mud, and so are easily spotted by the trained eye. Another way to locate them is, when they feed, their wide, forked tails actually stick out of the water. This is called "tailing." It is a sure way of spotting them.

Probably the best baits, as for most fish, are the natural foods, pieces of shrimp being about the most popular. Crayfish or

conches are also frequently employed natural baits. Some natural-bait fishermen like to work up an area's activity by chumming with bits of crustaceans. This is generally done on an incoming tide on a popular flat known as good feeding ground, and it works so well that it often overcomes bad fishing technique. The best time for fishing is on a tide about halfway in until it begins to ebb.

Sportsmen who like to use artificial baits find many kinds of flies that are known to lure bonefish. White or yellow bucktails have become the most popular patterns.

Tackle should be kept light but strong enough to cope with the tremendous strength of this species. A fly rod should be at least 9 feet long, while a spinning rod should be about 8 feet long. There should be at least 250 yards of 8-pound test line or monofilament on the reel and up to 400 yards if desired, so that the angler is fully prepared for the bonefish's suicide run for freedom. The Florida record fish was 15 pounds against a world's record of 18 pounds, but from my experience I would say a 10-pound bonefish has more strength and fight than many 50-pound fish of other species.

Bonefish have a very small mouth so that a number 1/0 hook serves the purpose best. Other necessary equipment are sun glasses and a hat. These are caught in the tropics and the angler continually looks into a glaring sun reflected in the water. Without sun glasses you can get the granddaddy of all eyestrains, as bad as the worst snow blindness. The hat protects against the heat and the burning sun.

Bonefishing is not recommended for all fisherman. Although it is a fish that inhabits shore-line water, relatively expensive equipment is used. Bonefish are only found in limited areas, which makes them inaccessible to most fishermen. They are difficult to hook and even more difficult to handle, once hooked, so it doesn't fill the bill for those that want results for number of fish caught. Then, because of its poor eating qualities, it isn't for the meat-on-the-table boys either. But for the true sportsman who enjoys fishing for a species more wary than trout and with more fight than a tiger, bonefishing is his choice. It is a thrilling sport indeed.

## Bonito

Three of us dropped our lines overboard and set them up at various trolling distances from the boat. We found one short piece of loose line, so we tied a silver spoon to it and dropped it over the side into the wake. The line extended back no more than twelve feet behind the boat and the only excuse we had for leaving it was that it could act as a teaser. We weren't out ten minutes when this line started acting crazy, so we quickly pulled it in and took off an 8-pound bonito.

Out went the line again. Before long another fish hit the teaser. This time we kept our wits about us and left him out there. We pulled our own lines in tight to the boat and two of us soon had fish on them. We took them in and threw our lines out again and had five fish aboard before the school stopped trailing our Pied Piper on the teaser.

When an angler goes after bonito he should remember that they will come in close to the boat. They are taken twenty to thirty feet back in the wake of the boat traveling six or eight miles an hour. They say bonito are attracted to the boat's propeller; after our experience I believe it. I had always thought the best distances for them were from twenty to thirty feet off the rear of the boat, but now I have changed my mind and say anywhere up to forty feet back will bring results.

There are several kinds of bonito on our coasts, as well as other fish all grouped together by the name of tuna. In the Pacific, there are the Pacific bonito and the oceanic bonito, which run the entire length of the Pacific coast and are taken from near shore all the way out to the extended limits of ocean fishing. On the Atlantic Coast, the Atlantic bonito, oceanic bonito, and false albacore make up the fish of this mackerel offshoot. Atlantic bonito is found in the Gulf and the Atlantic as far north as Cape Cod, while the oceanic bonito is found throughout the warm waters of the world. The false albacore is a Gulf and Atlantic fish seen as far north as Delaware Bay.

Fishing for this tribe, which I'll refer to as bonito, is fast and lots of fun and catches average about 10 pounds per fish. The best

catches are taken by offshore trolling. Japanese feathers, block-tin squid, cedar jigs, and silver spoons are sure fish catchers.

Equipment should be strong enough to hold fish up to 20 pounds. A glass rod weighing 6 to 8 ounces with a butt of approximately 14 inches is good. A reel can be a 5/0, give or take a size, holding at least 250 yards of 15-thread line. For a leader, steel wire No. 7 is necessary because of the fish's sharp teeth. The hooks vary from size 6/0 to 8/0, depending on the size fish to be taken.

Occasionally bonito can be taken from the surf, and when they are in close they are usually found around breakwaters. Here they can sometimes be seen breaking water nearby where anglers rush out to get them.

Jigs are best worked from shore and they must be cast and retrieved swiftly. Fast-moving lures are necessary if bonito are fished from a drifting boat.

Bonito are fast-swimming fish that travel about the coasts in schools. They run off the California coast south of the Point of Conception the year round and north of it during the warmer weather. On the Atlantic, they are north in the summer and early fall and then south and in the Gulf throughout the year.

How good a sports fish are they? Well, just haul into a struggle with a 15-pounder for twenty minutes and find out that they are considered pretty terrific sport.

## Cobia

In Florida, they say cobia are never fished for but are caught accidentally while going for other game. This is a half-truism originating from the tendency of the fish to spread themselves rather thinly in an area that includes the coasts of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. In the Gulf they may be taken anywhere along its coast.

The cobia is a large fish. It weighs 10 to 20 pounds, some occasionally topping 60 pounds. The record catch was a 102-pound monster taken off Cape Charles, Virginia.

These fish never travel in big schools like mackerel or bluefish but seem to move about in small groups or in pairs. They are gener-

ally in the area of the Middle Atlantic states from May to September, especially during the hot months of July and August. Fishermen take trips for them along Chesapeake Bay and the Carolina coast during the summer. Cobia are found in good number around Pensacola, Florida, in the spring and remain there until the beginning of summer. During this time, the young cobia come into the inshore waters where they can be taken around docks and piling. They are even caught with dip nets or by spearing during this season. They are popular along the southern portion of Florida all year.

The cobia is known for the dark lateral band running the entire length of the fish, which is why he is sometimes called the sergeant fish. He has a strange habit of staying close to floating objects and will often be found under a raft, a boat, or floating turtle, or he will frequent water near buoys or sunken pilings. Another sign that cobia may be about is the presence of sharks in the area; these fish seem to have no fear of sharks.

Cobia may be taken on spoons, feather jigs, or plugs when they are near the surface. Mullet, crabs, squid, and shrimps can be productive baits. On the Carolina coast, large strips of mossbunker are fished on the bottom.

When a cobia is hooked he is a hard fighter, taking long business-like runs as he tries to shake the hook. They will rip off line at an alarmingly fast rate and have to be braked with the drag to slow them down. After they are brought into the boat, watch out, for they often suddenly spring to life after appearing completely beaten.

Another interesting aspect of cobia is that they are a bottom as well as a topside fish. They work the bottoms for crabs and eels and sometimes act just like a cod, while at other times they will be topside darting after menhaden or mackerel, behaving like a completely different fish.

Tackle for cobia consists of ordinary medium to heavy-duty rods and reel capable of holding 200 to 300 yards of 25-pound test line tackle for channels, but bay cobia must be scaled down accordingly. Wire leader is a must and hooks vary from 1/0 to

7/0's, depending on the size of the fish expected. Cobia is a welcome addition to our group of sports fish that can be taken from small boats.

## Cod

Cod are deep-water fish that live along the bottom in offshore water but come near shore all along the New England and Oregon-Washington coast. Party boats regularly visit the codfish banks throughout the Northeast. The Pacific and Atlantic cod are different members of the same family, but for sports fishing purposes we will put them together.

The cod is big, ugly and dumb, but in his environment he knows how to survive and thrive. The bottom of the oceans throughout the cold waters of the world are literally swarming with members of the cod family.

He is a bottom feeder and isn't fussy about what he eats, and therefore always manages to get plenty. No angler need ever worry about treating a cod too roughly because hooks can be torn from him, ripping his mouth to shreds, but that won't discourage him from striking again.

On the banks of Maine and on the shores of Massachusetts and Rhode Island cod come close enough to shore in places to be taken by fishermen from small boats or skiffs. Particularly good places are Eastport, Rockland in Penobscot Bay, and Casco Bay, Maine; or Rockport and Plymouth Bay, Massachusetts. In Oregon, Pacific cod can be taken out of Waldport and Winchester Bay, while farther north in Washington, Westport and South Bend can be used as home base. On the West Coast they come into shallow water in the summer months. Here they are often taken by pier and dock fishermen.

Fishermen throughout the cod areas can go out during most of the year and lower the lines to fish that regularly run 15 to 50 pounds. The fish are available out of practically any harbor in their areas of activity. On the East Coast, winter weather extends them down to New Jersey, and Long Islanders in New York take them regularly on Cox's ledge.



One of the drawbacks of cod fishing is that it sometimes requires extremely heavy sinkers, up to 24 ounces, to get down to them. When a fish hits this weighted line he seems to have no life to him but in all fairness to the cod no fish could put up much of a fight with that kind of lead hanging from his mouth. Other places, especially the inshore spots where currents are light and tides soft, a few ounces of weight is all that is required—it is really remarkable to see the difference in the fish's fighting ability.

Cod go deep. In fact, when they are out at sea they go right off the edge of the continental shelf. They have been taken in depths greater than 1,000 feet. They will go anywhere for food and hate to pass up any morsel. Fishermen take advantage of this bit of fish psychology by "walking" baits. This is done by moving the rod tip up and down. When the fish sees the bait moving away from him he lunges at it. Cod have been brought up that have swallowed cans, rocks, and bottles—they just can't resist anything that might move out of their reach.

Rods depend upon how the fishing is done and they vary from medium-stiff bay rods to rugged heavy-duty rods. There should be several hundred yards of line at least 18-pound test. Lines go up to 36-pound test and are wound on 1/0 to 2/0 reels. Still popular in New England is the tarred drop line. Hooks vary from 5/0 to 9/0 in the Atlantic and 2/0 to 5/0 on the Pacific, according to the anglers' preference. Strong gut leaders are recommended for fishing over treacherous bottoms, and all equipment for cods must be rugged. I always found the hardest job in cod fishing was reeling the dead weight of sinkers up a couple of hundred feet off the bottom.

A bait that cod really like is clams, along with squid, strip-cut fish, mussels, and small bait fish. Cunners or bergalls make excellent bait and can be fished live or dead. Chumming can increase catches. A method often used is to locate a spot and throw down mussels or clams the night before fishing. This is especially useful for near-shore cod fishing.

Cod fishing can be a very enjoyable. Anglers intent upon filling the freezer are seldom disappointed.

## Drum (Black)

Black drum is one of the monsters that can be taken by the rowboat brigade on the East Coast. From Cape May in Delaware Bay to Cape Charles in Chesapeake Bay, fish up to 100 pounds are sitting and waiting to smash some unsuspecting angler's tackle to bits.

The black drum is brother to the channel bass—both members of the croaker family. Because of this relationship they look similar, except that the blacks are darker and shorter. Another characteristic of the blacks is a set of Chinese whiskers on the chin which are properly called barbels.

Black drum are found from the south of Massachusetts down the entire length of the East Coast and throughout the Gulf Coast. Delaware and Chesapeake Bay are considered the nation's real hot spots for black drum. Shoreline fishing begins in April, but is slow until the end of May when the females have rid themselves of their roe. From then on it is hot action in all the bays until summer heat shrivels up the activity. The fall brings them back again. In the Gulf States the best fishing is from January through March.

Drum fishing is bottom fishing, done from party boats, skiffs, rowboats, piers, or jetties. Equipment generally consists of a medium boat rod with a 5- to 5½-foot tip and a reel capable of holding 200 yards of line. Lighter tackle may be used by experts, but novices do well to be cautious and stick with line of at least 15- or 20-pound test.

The rig should be a fish-finder, because a nibbling fish often becomes frightened when he begins dragging a weight. Hooks are 8/0 or 9/0 O'Shaughnessy that are attached to several feet of wire leader. Sinker weights depend upon tides and currents so that in some places as much as 16 ounces is necessary.

Never jerk the line to hook a drum; if he is nibbling, it is a missed fish that won't be tempted back. To set a hook on a black drum, pull the pole up in a steady even motion. Once the fish is hooked the angler must be ready for the fish's hard dig for the bottom.

It is up to the fisherman to win this tug of war and keep leading the fish. The saying is, keep his head up, because if he gets it

pointing down he then gets his whole body behind a vicious downward thrust. If the angler lets this happen it means trouble.

When the fish is in close to the boat, gaff him and haul him aboard any way possible—and don't think bringing 50 pounds of angry fish into a rowboat isn't exhausting. Gaffs can often be stuck right in his mouth.

The best bait is a hook loaded to capacity with clams, which really tempts them, for even the cagiest ones are lured in for a taste. Other good baits are shedder crabs, mussels, or oysters. The last two are hard to keep secure and have to be threaded to the hook.

The black drum's size alone makes him worthwhile bringing home, therefore, I readily add him to our list of American shoreline sports fish.

## Eels

Pound for pound, there isn't a more rugged fish to be found anywhere in the world than the ugly and often snubbed eel, the fighting scavenger. Although it is a small fish, seldom over 6 pounds, it is born mean, and remains that way all its life. It is a coarse fish, a rough fish that sometimes grows to 6 feet in length. In many ways it is a genuine pest, yet one of the toughest little fighters the Atlantic Ocean offers.

There is a legend among eel fishermen that from the time an eel is hooked right to the moment it is cooked it never stops fighting. This is close enough to the truth to give some meaning to its reputation. I have had one fisherman swear to me that an eel he had caught was still fighting him in the frying pan—this after he had decapitated and skinned the eel. What happens in that fresh-killed eels will give nervous twitches hours after they are dead. Often the heat of a frying pan will start an eel squirming all over the pan. Even the cut-up pieces join the dance, which has scared the life out of many a fisherman's wife who graciously agreed to cook her hero's catch.

Eels are strange creatures of the deep and come from a world we know little about. They are born in an area of the Atlantic

Ocean just south of Bermuda. Here both American and European eels spawn and, after spawning, the old eels remain to die. The young eel, a strange and weird creature called a *leptocephalus*, is transparent and tapelike, with large teeth. It is incredible how these small eels can make their way to their chosen water often 5,000 miles away. Some head east for Europe, going as far as the fjords of Norway, while the American eels head west as far as the St. Lawrence River. It may take them two years to reach their chosen shore, and, considering that an eel's top swimming speed is estimated at 7 miles per hour, it is a wonder they get anywhere.

Once the young eels are near land and fresh water, a complete metamorphosis takes place. They lose the *leptocephalus* appearance and assume the tubelike shape of adulthood. Now, two to three inches in length and transparent (called a glass eel) they start upstream in rivers and creeks in the spring of the year and gradually change to their black adult color. The males separate from the females, the former staying mostly in salt waters, in riverheads, bays, and tidal creeks, while the female continues upstream to fresh water. Dams and waterfalls or other hazards do not stop their migration. Eels, if necessary, leave the water and slither through wet grass at night to get around any obstacle in the way of their journey.

In fresh water, the female grows rapidly as she devours everything she can. The salt-water males become the scavengers of the tidal areas, living in these surroundings until maturity, when they head back to Bermudan waters.

The females that are ready for mating leave their fresh-water homes and start back for salt water, once again conquering all the obstacles. If for some reason, they are prevented from reaching their destination, they eventually die without spawning. Eels have been known to live rather long lives, some having been reported to reach the age of forty to fifty years.

Since 95 per cent of all sports fishing is done by rod and line, let's discuss that aspect of eeling first, even though it is not the best way to go for them. I have found that organized trips for eels with rod and line are rare. Most eel fishing is done spontane-

ously, when other fishing is slow and someone suggests, "Let's try for eels."

Eels are practically everywhere along our shores. They abound in all our great fishing areas: the bays of Maine, all along the New England coastline, Chesapeake Bay, all the way to Florida.

The fisherman should remember that eels are scavengers and will take almost anything edible. Among the most popular baits are killies, spearing, and other small fish that are attractive to the large eels. Other good baits include all kinds of worms, clams, as well as shedder crabs and small pieces of any fish at hand.

A most important fact to remember when eel fishing is to keep the hooks on the bottom at all times. A hook as little as 18 inches from the mud is for the most part worthless. Use one or two hooks off a spreader so that they stay low. A big point to successful eeling is to locate a hole where they are and then get the bait down to them. The best time for eel fishing is during ebb tide—either high or low. At high tide, eels leave their holes and spread out over the flats in search of food, while at the low ebb tide they collect in any deep holes near shore and are suckers for a fisherman's bait.

Eels are big night feeders. Around shallow grassy banks at night, one can hear eels making a peculiar smacking sound as they feed on shrimp and spearing. Some fishermen use strong lights to attract the fish and catch them that way; however, being a sportsman, that goes against my grain and I don't recommend it. Night fishing for eels will get you all you want and lights are hardly necessary.

Aside from their snakelike appearance that detracts from their popularity among fishermen, is the trouble they can cause once they are landed. The fact that they never quit fighting should be in their favor, but too often they upset the angler's tackle, which is held against them. If a fisherman boats one and doesn't immediately attend to it, the eel in its terrific effort for freedom will snarl a line into the worst mess imaginable. A simple thing such as putting a rag over an eel and grabbing it that way eliminates the danger of fouling the line. With the rag held firmly over the eel, the hook can be dislodged simply and easily. Do this and you will have no further trouble.

Eels are the most cunning bait thieves you will ever encounter. A fisherman who is not alert and doesn't strike his line at the first feel of a bite will soon find his bait gone. If you strike and miss, drop the line and be poised to strike again, because if there is bait left the eel will hit it again. Expert bait thieves as they are, sometimes the fierce nature of the eel will betray them. When the big five-footers are on a feeding binge, they sometimes swallow a hook so deep that it is completely lost from sight. In this case, merely cut the line and replace the hook—they're cheap enough for a fish willing to give that fierce a fight. A No. 9 Chestertown is considered to be an excellent hook.

A method of eeling called "bobbing" is both popular and productive. A worsted or silk line tied onto a wooden stick is all the equipment needed. Tie about a dozen sand worms into a good tight ball on the end of the line, which should be no longer than 6 to 8 feet—just long enough to reach bottom. Now add a sinker and lower away to the eel holes. At the feel of a strike, hoist up the bob and the eel will have its teeth stuck in the worsted line and worms, and can be lifted into the boat. A few shakes over a waiting barrel or burlap sack drops him off and the fisherman is ready for another try.

Big eels are rugged fighters, and small ones, too, put up a good scrap on light tackle. All are excellent eating and an eeling excursion often makes for a pleasant day's sport.

### Flounder (Southern)

The Southern flounder comes inshore to the beaches and bays at night when they swim in so close to shore that they practically land on the beach. It is not uncommon to see a flounder in six inches of water at night during a high tide. Sportsmen have taken advantage of this habit of theirs and the sport of gigging has become popular. This is done by shining a light in the water to blind the fish. It would seem easy to spear fish in a few inches of water, but actually it is so hard to see this remarkably camouflaged fish that they may be stepped on before anyone knows they are there. Their colors blend so perfectly with the bottom that the

sportsman must have keen eyes to pick out the almost invisible outline of a fish against the sand. Once the flounder is shaken out of his hypnotic trance he streaks for deep water and safety.

The flats sometimes bring the sportsman some unexpected adventures. Large female sting rays measuring up to 3 feet wide, with rays in their tails over a foot long, also visit the shallows. They spend the night here to give birth to their young which are born alive. When a light is beamed on them, they too become blinded, but here the similarity with flounder ends. Instead of lying still, they swim angrily about, thrashing the water with their flippers. Giggling one of these big sting rays is like holding a bronco by the tail. Other occasional visitors are water moccasin which also hunt the flats for their supper. I prefer to steer wide of these fellows.

The southern flounder, or, as he is sometimes called, the southern fluke, resembles the northern fluke in many ways. The size is similar, average fish weighing 1 or 2 pounds, with occasional specimens going over 20 pounds. The largest ever taken weighed 26 pounds. This fish is found from Cape Hatteras south and throughout the Gulf of Mexico. They are rather scarce in the southern reaches of Florida.

Conventional fishing for them calls for almost the same equipment as northern fluking, with rods, lines, and hooks the same size. Weights used are lighter than those necessary farther north. Baits in the southern regions, of course, differ; small crabs, shrimps, squid, and shiners are the most successful.

The flounder can be taken in certain bays and passes all year, but the best inshore fishing is in the summer, because during cold weather the fish move out from shore into deep water. Outside, they are caught by bottom fishing all year round.

During the summer, when the flounders are in close, they offer rowboat fishermen good bottom sport, and surfmen will hook them regularly while fishing from the Gulf's beautiful beaches. Fishing for flounder is better in the Gulf than on the Atlantic Coast. Northwest Florida around Panama City and Pensacola, and the Alabama-Mississippi-Louisiana shoreline offers the best fishing.

The southern flounder can be distinguished physically from the northern fluke by fin ray count and by its generally lighter color, which is olive to light brown. Three or four clearly marked dark spots are also characteristic of southern flounder. Both are excellent eating.

### Flounder (Winter)

The most popular fishing in the United States is for flounders. Different species inhabit all shore lines of our country and offer an easily attainable fish that is sporty, plentiful, and excellent eating.

On the East Coast, flounder fishing is of two distinct kinds: (1) winter flounders and (2) summer flounders, or fluke.

Winter flounders are the smaller of the two species. They dig their way out of the mud in early spring at the first sign of warm weather (usually March, around New York and southward, but a little later farther north). With the advent of the first flounders, great excitement is evident in all the bay and inlet waters from Maine to North Carolina. Flounder fishing is especially popular near all the big Eastern seaboard cities because, in spite of extremely heavy fishing pressure and water pollution, the supply never seems to become exhausted.

The first few weeks of spring can be a very rewarding time for fishing. In the cold water the flounders are hungry. It is common knowledge among fishermen that the only really good time for flounder fishing is when the cold is such that you have to keep blowing on your hands for warmth. For early-season fishing, take the advice of an old fisherman: dress warmly and bring some spirits to fortify yourself against weather.

The winter flounder is a species that inhabits our bays, inlets, and coves along the shore line. It is a bottom fish that, because of his small mouth, feeds in invertebrates—pieces of shellfish and worms which he sucks out of the mud and silt. A flounder is known for his insatiable appetite, there seems no end to his hunger. Although this greed has caused many of them to end in a pan, it is the prime reason for their continued existence in the heaviest-



fished bays. A flounder eats so much, it causes his rapid maturity. An average flounder in three years' time attains a length of 7 to 8 inches and weighs close to a half pound. During the fourth year this fish will grow two more inches and will also lay and fertilize millions of eggs.

Winter flounder are not migratory fish. Tagging experiments have proved that they come into the same bays year after year. It is wise to give these fish certain conservation thoughts, especially near our large metropolitan areas where the pressure on them becomes unbelievably heavy. Sportsmen should throw back any fish under 8 inches in order to give the fish another year to grow and to lay eggs. Thus we would assure ourselves an abundant supply of these delicious flatfish.

Flounders are bottom feeders and should be fished accordingly. The best locations are in tidal bays where there is an abundance of muddy bottoms for feeding. Fish the flats in 5 to 18 feet of water during high tide and gradually move in closer to the channels as the tide recedes. In a full low tide, fish the channels also. With an incoming tide, which is best for fishing, reverse the rule and work in toward the flats, away from the channels as the tide progresses. An important point to bear in mind is that flounders have to be searched out; they will not come to you.

Flounders do not prowl the bays like bluefish or stripers but move slowly over the bottom as they seek food. Once food is located, they stay there; so you should fish one spot for just a short time if no strikes occur. Experiment until a place where they are feeding is located. A fisherman may be as near as ten to fifteen feet distant from flounders but unless he moves in closer he will go home empty-handed. They tend to drift with the tide; they do not swim about in search of food. They like clean, black, mud bottoms, and seldom are found over oily mud. What oily mud can do to flounder fishing is best exemplified by City Island, the Bronx. The water between the Bronx mainland and the island was once excellent flounder ground, but with the advent of many people and power boats it has petered out completely. It has not been fished out, but flounders have left this area because the bottom mud has

become oily and dirty, and now fishermen must go to the seaward side of the island if they want flounders.

Flounders suck the mud for food, they eat pieces of shellfish, mussels, clams, or other small fish and worms, any of which is good bait; but the most popular bait has been found to be sand-worms. For best results, put a small piece of worm about 1 to 1½ inches on a 8 Chestertown hook. Flounders should be struck the instant a nibble is felt, but it is important to make the strike a very short one, moving the tip of the pole no more than six inches. A hard, long strike usually rips the hook out of their small, delicate mouths. If the fish is missed, drop the line down again, and chances are another fish will take it if there is bait left. A flounder usually strikes only once, but since they congregate in groups it is always worth trying again.

The best rig for flounder fishing is several hooks tied to a wire spreader, allowing a number of hooks to be kept on the bottom without tangling. Sinkers should be just heavy enough to reach bottom and hold the hooks there. Sometimes a 1-ounce sinker is ample when fishing on the flats but usually 2 or 3 ounces are required. Other times, in very strong currents, 6 or 8 ounces are necessary. Remember that flounders are relatively small and a heavy sinker takes away all the sport of their determined struggle.

Sometimes complaints are heard that flounders are not sporty fish and need only to be pulled off the bottom like so much dead weight. Every such complaint means that the fisherman is obviously using the wrong equipment. The proper gear should be light. A bait-casting rod or a small bay rod is excellent, because most flounders weigh between ½ to 1½ pounds. With light tackle, you may enjoy maximum play from these scrappy fish. All too often the fish are horsed with heavy rods and all the sport thereby is lost. In areas like the bays of Maine and Cape Cod where flounders run larger, slightly heavier equipment is permissible, but it is still worth remembering that a winter flounder weighing more than 5 pounds is seldom caught. Light equipment is the thing in heavily fished areas.

At birth, the young flounders look like ordinary fish. For several months they live in the bays, feeding on algae and trying to keep

out of the way of larger fish. After they are several months old one eye begins to shift and then actually crosses over to the other side of the head. When this happens, the fish begins to swim on one side, with eyes up. The top of its body darkens while the blind underside turns white. The fish begins to swim on or near the bottom, sometimes burying itself in the mud. Its darkened topside represents one of nature's interesting camouflage jobs. In only a few feet of water it is practically impossible to see the fish as it swims over the dark bottom.

Winter flounders are cold-water fish. From Cape Cod northward they are an all-year fish, but south of that locality they are definitely seasonal. Here the fish come out of their winter mud early in March and remain inland until some time in May when they go out to deeper, cooler water. A few fish remain but they are small and not worth catching. In the fall, with the first cool weather in October, they begin to arrive again and continue biting until late in November, when they dig into the mud, awaiting spring and the horde of fishermen welcoming their return.

### Fluke

If there is any fish that makes plain the difference between inshore and offshore fishing it is the summer flounder, or fluke. Every summer the 2- to 20-pound member of the flounder family comes into bays all along the coast from Florida to Massachusetts, where he becomes the most fished game in the ocean.

To give some idea of the pressure on these fish, the New York State Department of Conservation made public some figures of a survey on fluke fishing. In Great South Bay, New York, a quarter of a million fishermen took an estimated two million fluke in one season. They fished from shore and from 500 rowboats, plus private boats that ranged from skiffs to cabin cruisers.

This survey drew some exciting conclusions which should cheer fluke men all along the coast. It was found that more fluke were taken per fisherman in the year studied than in the previous year and that more fish were taken in both of those years than were

taken twenty years earlier. Imagine, in spite of the removal of so many fish in a year, the fishing is still on the increase.

Among fluke fishermen, one group will claim the only way to catch them is to go offshore in a party or private boat and maneuver to their haunts. Opposed to this view is an equally emphatic group that swears the only way to take fluke is from a rowboat, fishing the inlets or bays.

The bay adherents explain that they like to go out in a rowboat to enjoy the sport of locating fish in holes, sloughs, or channels. Two friends of mine argued for a full hour over a spot, one holding that it was at least 10 feet too far in the channel. All the while they were arguing, we were catching fish.

Members of the rowboat brigade move about the inlet waters with the aid of outboards or by the hard work of pulling oars. Each has a special spot near a favorite boathouse. Others will only approach their hole when the tide is just right and can expect action, saving it for the one big hour of the day.

The day starts by drifting over the bay with the tide or current. The water to be drifted over is selected and the boat is set to start at a strategic place. Then it is all lines down.

To catch fluke drifting, keep the bait away from the boat and let out 50 to 100 feet of line, depending upon the depth of the water. For this kind of fishing, 2 to 8 ounces of sinker are necessary, for the line should be on the bottom and yet be allowed bounce as it moves. About a foot or two above the sinker is a swivel, to which a hook with a long gut leader is attached. At least two hooks are used, and they are anywhere from 2/0 hooks, which are good for the small young fish early in the season, to a 5/0 hook which are better for bigger ones. Line can be any standard salt-water line.

In your own boat, light equipment offers the best sport. Many bay men blame the heavier equipment used offshore in party boats for spoiling the sport. Another advantage the inshore men claim is that the currents in the bays are not as strong as offshore, and consequently lighter sinkers result in more sport from the fish.

When drifting in the inland waters choose places over 10 feet in depth, as fluke are seldom caught in shallower water. The bouncing sinker sometimes fools a novice into thinking there is a strike,

but a day or two of fluking soon teaches him to distinguish between the two. In fluke fishing the mark of a real pro is the ability to tell a nibble while the sinker bumps along. Fluke at times will take the bait slowly and have to be coaxed to strike; therefore inexperienced fishermen can drift right over schools and not even know they are there.

Learning the proper method of taking nibblers can increase one's catch by 25 per cent. Several short quivering jerks of the line will signal that a fluke is nibbling. When you feel this, let out line slowly and steadily, encouraging the fish to hit again. If he only nibbles let out more line—sometimes 50 feet of line must be let out before he finally hits it hard. A real hit is easy to tell. Your pole will tip down and the fight will begin as he turns, flips his tail, and runs along the bottom.

The fluke is then fought up and he gets angrier and angrier the closer you bring him toward the boat. He runs, shakes, and dives in his effort to bolt the hook. When next to the boat, he is gaffed or netted. A word of caution about using a net: veritable doormats, the kind you dream about, have been lost with landing nets that were too small. The record summer flounder, a 20-pounder taken at Oak Beach, New York, at Fire Island Inlet, was 37 inches long and 32 inches wide. Fifteen-pounders, which are taken quite regularly, are only 6 inches shorter. The fisherman with a landing net should be prepared for the biggest fish or stand a chance of losing a prize. I always have a small hand gaff with me just in case.

This is what happened to my wife's uncle: He hooked a monster and had only an ordinary landing net. For fifteen minutes he kept the fish at the side of the boat but couldn't haul it in because it wouldn't fit the net. He finally lost it, and it was all his own fault. If he'd had a gaff he would have been saved all the anguish. It would have saved me too, because I always have to listen to the story!

Fluke, whether inshore, offshore, or in a bathtub have one common characteristic—they are hogs. They love to eat and they will eat all day. A fluke gets his food by lying hidden on the bottom, and like a stalking feline pouncing on shrimp, squid, small

crabs, any kind of small fish, marine worms, or anything else he can sink his strong jaws into. For fluke baits, it seems almost anything will do, but probably best for inshore fishing is big fat killies. Strips of any kind of fish—whole spearing, mossbunker, squid, worms, or clams are also good. Strips of those annoying sea robins make an excellent bait.

Another popular method of inshore fishing is to lie anchored over one spot. Knowledge of the fish's peculiar habits is important for this method, since an active spot has to be located to make it worthwhile. Fluke move slowly over the bottom busily looking for prey. They prefer clean, stony or sandy bottoms and the ends of sand bars where currents and eddies swirl bait fish. They congregate in these choice spots by the hundreds. Another sure place to find them is where small creeks meet the channels.

A good way for the still-fishing angler to increase the activity is to rile up the bottom a little by scratching up the mud. A mossbunker chum line can be used to attract fish toward the boat.

During low tides the best inshore fishing takes place right in the channels where the water remains at least 10 to 12 feet deep. Later, as the tide comes in, the edges of the channel should be fished and, finally, at the high tides the flats are best. If you're inshore, especially at night, and you should hear loud smacking noises, it means fluke are right on the flats taking killies. Sometimes when they are in close like that or in shallow water, trolling is a good method for getting them, but the still fishing or drifting methods are more often used.

Fluke differ from their close relative, the winter flounder, in that they are bigger and also have fully developed jaws. This means fluke can and do attack food fish whereas winter flounders primarily suck the mud for bits of food. A fluke uses the bottom as his camouflage and, being voracious, attacks marine life vigorously. He strikes at anything within range.

The fish spend only the summers in the bays, in winter they are out at sea. In the spring, as the warm weather begins, great armies of them filter through the inlets to the inshore bays. Here, to the anglers' delight, they stay until the first signs of cold fall weather.

The fish breed late in the fall and, luckily for us anglers, a very

high percentage of young fluke survive. The young, like their parents, run for the bottom almost as soon as they are born. Here they seek out protective places from the bigger fish until they go to sea as young fish.

Massachusetts to Florida is their range, although the best fishing takes place from Chesapeake Bay north to the southern shore of Cape Cod. In this area, they are the chief sports fish for a population that numbers over fifty million. In spite of the fact they are about when the vast majority of these people go on vacation, they thrive and survive. It is almost as if these prolific spawners are thumbing their noses at us, laughing at their ability to stay ahead of fishing pressure.

Hot spots for fluke include Barnegat Lighthouse and Atlantic City, New Jersey; Rockaway Beach; Montauk Point, and Fire Island Inlet, New York; Martha's Vineyard, Buzzards Bay, Orleans and Plymouth Bay, Massachusetts.

For the inshore fisherman, one word of caution. Don't venture out of a bay into open water in a rowboat. These areas become suddenly treacherous for small boats. A friend of mine who was caught in a sudden squall is alive today only by the grace of God and a passing cruiser.

Offshore fluke men generally go out in cruisers or party boats, and I must say for them that they are certainly successful. Fluking offshore is done in the same general way as inshore. Clean, sandy bottoms before sloughs and drop-offs are spots where food floats to the waiting fish. The captains of the bigger ships have electric fish-finders which help to locate the exact location of a school. The big boats usually drift while at sea, letting the tide sweep them in or out.

The same methods of fishing are used, but one noticeable difference is that out here fishermen use sturdier poles than inshore. This is because on a party boat there may be twenty to thirty persons fishing and light lines tend to get thrown about and tangle. If a fisherman tangles up with someone once, it is forgiven; he may be forgiven twice; but the third time might well result in his swimming home.

Offshore fluke fishing is the mainstay of the party-boat fleets.

No other fish attracts the public as does this flat, fighting bottom fish. He is excellent eating, plentiful, relatively easy to catch and a hard fighter. What other fish can meet those specifications. No wonder he is a favorite.

### Jack (Crevallé)

Fishing along the shores of the Gulf Coast is being licensed to fish in paradise, for nowhere else is there as beautiful a body of water. It is this clear blue, gently warm water, with a surf as mild as a Hilton Hotel bathtub, that helps make jack fishing such a pleasure.

Jack crevallé, or common jack, is found throughout the Gulf and in the warmer sections of the Atlantic Coast. Occasionally one will get lost and wander as far north as New Jersey, but I wouldn't recommend any jack fishing trips even as far up as Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The Gulf crawls with them as the schools dart along its shores, and become prizes for pier, surf, and rowboat fishermen throughout the area.

The smaller jacks from 2 to 5 pounds run in big schools along the shore to attack bait fish. When they are busy after bait fish they come right into the shore practically into the breakers. Sometimes, looking into the surf, an angler can see fast-moving shadows—jacks hurrying about. Other times, a school can be located by the familiar bird watching. When the birds get excited there is usually a dinner being chased to the surface. Watching mullets take to the sky when jacks are on their tails is a sight to behold.

A few excellent spots for jack fishing are Port Aransas; Port Isabel; Galveston, Mobile Bay, Pensacola, and in the Indian River section of Florida. There is also good fishing throughout southern Florida and the Keys. The best season for jacks in the northern sections of the Gulf is from May to August, while in southern Florida and the southern portion of Texas they run all year round.

For an angler who is not trying to establish weight records, the way to begin fishing is to locate a school. Best places are narrow channels leading into a bay, and in the late spring they'll some-



times get as thick as ants on an anthill. Mouths of rivers, the flats, bays, and even brackish backwater are their haunts.

Fishing a gigantic school, the angler has no problem except to bring them in; but if the school isn't large, a good way to keep them around is to take your time playing the first fish. The jacks, like dolphins, who are famous for this habit, will follow a hooked fish almost to the beach. Unhook the fish and cast quickly into the remaining school. In all probability, you will have two fish instead of one.



*A metal squid rig: a mullet squid.*

Fishing is done with live baits or artificials. Pier fishermen working in crowded areas do best to stick to baits where large live shrimp served on a 4/0 to 8/0 hook should bring good rewards. Mullet or strip-cut fish of all varieties will also attract them. For fishermen working the surf, artificials are more fun and many times more productive. The fish take almost any kind of plug thrown at them, but they especially go after yellow or white ones. Plugs that dive or run under the surface of the water generally bring better results than purely top plugs. Feathered jigs or plain silver spoons are other excellent lures that can be counted on to take jacks.

The jack is in the water looking for bait fish, and when he finds them he attacks. When bait fish see the jacks they know what is up and take to the hills; so that an angler fishing an artificial would do well to keep his bait moving fast, just like a running fish. This is done by taking three or four fast turns on the reel and then lifting the rod tip to change the lure's speed with a jerky motion. Repeat this action all the way in for results.

Recommended tackle for jacks depends upon whether you are going for the big ones offshore or for the inshore school fish. Inshore fishing calls for monofilament 10-pound test line on a medium spinning outfit. This gets maximum fight out of them and

still assures control of the fish. Offshore trolling for the big ones, 20 pounds or over demands a rod with 6-ounce tip and a reel holding at least 250 yards of 9-thread line is necessary. Steel wire leader is recommended.

Jacks, like most predatory fish, fight hard once they are hooked. They take sudden dives and pull for the bottom where they make repeated strong angry runs. Often on light tackle they are still fighting even if they have to be dragged in tail first.

Jacks are pretty fish with angular heads and forked tails. They have black fins on the upper side of the body and yellow ones on the underside. Their yellow belly and silver sides make them colorful. They are not considered the best eating fish, but if they are cleaned quickly it greatly improves their taste. Jacks can't be too bad-tasting because, after all, they are a close relative to the pompano. They are exciting to catch, and therefore are classified a sports fish.

### Jewfish

Anyone who says it takes an investment of several hundred dollars to catch fish weighing over 300 pounds has never tried jew-fishing. All along both coasts of Florida and throughout the Gulf in inland and offshore waters, these largest members of the grouper family are common.

The spotted jewfish, or black sea bass, is an inshore fish of 150 to 300 pounds average, though on occasion they weigh 800 pounds and measure more than 6 feet in length. His brother the black jewfish, or warsaw grouper, is found farther offshore in the coral reefs where he grows to a maximum of 500 pounds. The average size of warsaw groupers is 25 to 50 pounds, but fish in the 150- to 200-pound bracket are common.

The jewfish is a huge ugly fish that sits on the bottom in a pot hole or other kind of crevice and makes that his home. There he sits and sits, just opening and closing his mouth, until something edible comes by. He will then lumber over to swallow it. It seems a rather uninteresting life this jewfish leads, resting in one spot

all the time, but it must be a successful way. What other fish that hurry and scurry around ever attain the size of 800 pounds?

I'm a lover of light tackle but for jewfish this is ridiculous; it has to be of the block-and-foil variety. To start with, hooks are 10/0 to 13/0 shark hooks, while the strongest 1/32-inch chain leader available is attached to 24- to 36-thread linen line. This can be fished double if big ones are expected, and a double line gives the fisherman something that tests out in the vicinity of 150 pounds. Wind this up on reels that measure 4/0 to 6/0. Rods should be heavy-duty 14 to 20 ounces. Hand lines in the 24- to 36-thread category are probably the most commonly used tackle.

The spotted jewfish are usually found around jetties, piling, and wrecks. He is also taken at the entrances to creeks and sloughs or wherever there is a large pothole. Smaller black jewfish are taken in bays near channels but the larger warsaws are out on the banks.

To hook one, lower the line to the bottom, carefully choosing the spot, because he must be sought out. Baits can be whole blue crabs (female crabs with roe are especially good); whole live mullet or ladyfish, and large chunks of cut fish will also attract them. When the fish takes the bait he doesn't tear into it but at first only mouths it, which is why the angler must patiently wait, giving the fish plenty of slack line until he really gulps it.

Set the hook with a hard yank so as to bury it deep in the fish's flesh. A jewfish's reaction to getting hooked is almost nonexistent. Only when the angler tries to reel him in does trouble start. The big problem with them is that they fight like mules. You can't get them to move. And when 500 or 600 pounds decides it doesn't want to move, it becomes a back-breaking problem to budge the hulk.

Jewfish break lines as easy as we break spider webs, and often when a fish is finally captured he will look as if he has grown a Chinese beard, with five or six lines coming out of his mouth. There is a story of one that had broken so many lines that, when finally captured, it was with the aid of a winch and cable from a truck.

The fish can also be taken by trolling with a large spoon, working slowly back and forth through their deep holes.

Hot spots for them include the Ten Thousand Islands region, the Everglades region, and the Keys in Florida, while Galveston, Aransas Pass, and Port Isabel in the Texas area produce the big ones. The Pacific coast has them from Mexico south.

The jewfish is very good eating; the steaks always have a ready market. He is a tough guy to get in on a hook and the biggest monster of the inshore sports fish.

### Ladyfish

If you have an old plug in your tackle box that has never taken a fish and you seriously wonder if anything would strike it, don't despair, for ladyfish will guarantee plenty of action on it. Rent a boat out on Mobile Bay when the ladyfish schools are about and cast your old dog out to the thickly populous school of busy feeders. Watch one hit it almost as soon as it touches the water. If the fish is missed and the plug goes sailing fifteen feet through the air, the angler had better set himself up again, for another fish will be sure to hit it immediately. I once saw a novice with his plug being knocked around the water like a ping pong ball.

When one is hooked, it's all action, because they are a hard-fighting species. They put up a flashy fight with plenty of short runs and hard jumps, somewhat reminiscent of his bigger cousin, the tarpon. A fisherman has to be constantly alert when one of these is on the line because the fish is very exciting on light tackle.

Ladyfish are favorites of many causeway fishermen in Florida. They watch for them and listen for the noises a school makes as it breaks all around in the water.

Schools of ladyfish, big-eye herring 10-pounders—skipjacks as they are sometimes called, come into the bays, inlets, and lagoons all along the warmer waters of the Atlantic and the Gulf. They congregate near trestles and bridges, near deep channels in bays, and go over the grassy flats in search of food. Ladyfish go after shrimp, crabs, crustaceans, and mullet, which they devour in unbelievable quantity. An angler can use any of these as live bait if he is fishing with a light bait-casting rod, spinning rod, or fly rod.

Best fishing generally is at night and on a tide that is beginning to go out.

When the fish are really on a rampage any artificial will do; however, at slower times when they have to be enticed, a popping plug or a small spoon will bring 3-pounders to the line. A silver spoon trolled on the edges of a school will pick off many fish in the 1- or 2-pound size.

Ladyfish are taken in most of the bays and inlets of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida where they are plentiful and active.

As for eating these fish, forget about it—unless you enjoy a mouthful of bones. Throw them back, for they are good sports fish, and anyway, the one you throw back may become a record-breaking 12-pounder that would some day fight an angler glassy-eyed.

### Mackerel (Atlantic)

The mackerel family make up one of the largest family of food fish in the world. They include tuna, bonito, albacore, wahoo, Spanish mackerel, king mackerel, Pacific mackerel, and Atlantic mackerel—sometimes called Boston mackerel.

The Atlantic mackerel, which spends the summer months in the New England coastal area, is a smaller member of this renowned family of sports fish, whose average size is from 1 to 2 pounds and 12 to 20 inches in length. Occasionally some will go up to 10 pounds but they remain mostly under 5 pounds.

The mackerel spends the winter months out at sea and as soon as spring starts, they migrate toward shore where great numbers school up at Cape Hatteras and work their way north. Their drive to our shores is a drive to reproduce their kind, for during the migration northward the females lay their eggs all along the waters from Maryland to Massachusetts. The female lays up to a half million eggs which the males will fertilize. With so prolific a fish, it would seem that the sea would soon be overrun with Atlantic mackerel. However, there have been many years when they have been scarce. The reason for this is that in some years only one or two fish of each million reach maturity. Mackerel eggs

and young mackerel are so easily destroyed by fish, man, or weather. Commercial fishing, which is a barometer of the volume of fish present, shows the cycles of the mackerel population. For some years the catch goes down to 5 million pounds, while in other years it soars to 180 million pounds.

There are known schedules of time when the fish should be in a particular area along the coast, such as Maryland in April, New Jersey and New York in May, and Massachusetts in June; but these are extremely rough estimates because the fish are unpredictable. Some years they turn up on schedule and some years they do not even show in an area at all. Their southern migration in the fall is just as unpredictable.

The small 6- to 10-inch fish, called "tinkers," have recently become scarce in the New York-New Jersey waters. Some people feel the marauding bluefish have forced these small mackerel to take a different offshore route to the northern summer waters.

The successful way to catch mackerel is to locate a school of them and then get ready for action. A school of mackerel may be numbered in the millions; they have been known to be miles long and over a mile in width, with every member in this mad swirling water busily looking for food. They are a perfect example of the fact that in the northern regions fewer species occur but generally one sees larger concentrations of a particular species. Anyone who has ever seen a mackerel school would testify to that.

The Bostons are taken in great numbers every summer in such places as Mackerel Cove on Bailey's Island, in Casco Bay, Maine; and South West Harbor on Mt. Desert Harbor, Maine; or at Cape Ann or Plymouth, Massachusetts. During their migrations good places for them include Narragansett Bay; the south shore of Long Island; and the Delaware or Chesapeake Bay areas.

With the fish running only a pound or two, all Boston mackerel fishing should be done with light tackle. They can be taken on light spinning gear, bait-casting rods, or fly rods, all of which serve the purpose excellently. Use a No. 3 to 7 Carlisle hook for the small inshore fish and 1/0 to 3/0 hook with a long shank for the bigger ones.

When the fish come into the bays they can be taken from small

boats, while at other times fishermen do best going out for them. It's a good idea to remember they are shy fish and easily scared off by the boat. They also have a tendency to shy away from heavy dark lines, therefore more fish can be caught by using low-visibility lines, or, if other lines are used, a long gut leader should be attached.

In mackerel fishing, baits are not the all-important item. The first and most important thing is to locate the school. A good idea is to chum an area with mossbunker, which brings them up from deep water and into range of the fisherman. When they are in close and swimming eagerly about, a bright diamond jig gets results in a hurry. Put a small strip of fish or a ribbon of squid on the jig and then cast into the school; during the retrieve, be ready.

Other lures that take the Bostons include wet flies, streamers, spoons, or plugs. A trick to use in fly fishing is to dip the flies in sardine oil or in the oil of the mossbunker before casting. This brings the fish to it faster.

If the fish stay around the boat and you find they are not taking artificials, switch quickly to natural bait. A piece of clam or a strip of squid will do. This change is sometimes necessary after artificials have taken a number of them out of a school, for it seems that word gets out that a particularly succulent-looking bait is no good for Mr. Mackerel and he makes it taboo. This is a good point to remember, for it can be very frustrating to see them all around while you stand waiting for something to happen. With natural bait this never occurs. Usually a light sinker is necessary with squid or clam.

Other natural baits commonly used for mackerel fishing include jumbo shrimp, worms, and strips of fish—and naturally the most common strip of fish used is a strip of mackerel.

In case an angler has difficulty locating a school, he may begin trolling with a 2- or 4-ounce jib worked at different levels until he finds he can get results that way. Mackerel are anywhere from two to forty feet down. After a school is located, the action is usually swift and plentiful. Mackerel are gentle nibblers of bait and an angler must be on the alert to set the hook on the first nibble. Once they feel the hook, they spit the whole thing out and

swim off as fast as their streamlined bodies take them, so a line should be gently struck, on the first sign of a nibble.

Although their strike is light, they are good fighting fish. A 2-pound mackerel gives as good an account of himself as most glamor fish of that weight. An Atlantic mackerel takes off on a burst once he feels the cold steel and continues fighting until boated. Such a fight is best appreciated with light tackle, while with some of the horse mackerel tackle you see out in the water it is hardly appreciated at all.

All the fish of a particular school are of one size and seldom vary much more than an inch, no matter how numerous the school. This is also true of Pacific salmon and tuna; but with mackerel, there are so many more fish in a school that it never fails to amaze anglers. Smaller fish travel in larger schools, whereas the bigger ones appear to thin out.

If the mackerel are hitting, an angler may easily bring home several hundred fish. Party boats, if they hit into something big, catch so many that it seems impossible to put another on board, but still they come in until either the school moves off or it's time to go home. Sometimes a shark appears and that puts a sudden stop to the fishing as the fish streak off for safety.

As food fish, mackerel is one of the most common table fish in the Northeast. Broiled over charcoal, I find them delicious.

### Mackerel (Cero)

The cero mackerel (*Scomberomorus Regalis*), or painted mackerel as they are also called, is hardest to identify of all the mackerel family. They are most often mistaken for the Spanish mackerel which they closely resemble in size and appearance. They can be distinguished by the position of a soft dorsal fin, which starts directly above the anal fin. Another distinguishing feature is the presence of a golden-brown horizontal stripe extending from the gill cover to the tail. Most Gulf fishermen identify them by this stripe.

This family of mackerel are present throughout the Gulf and along the southern reaches of the Atlantic Coast, though not in



great numbers except along the southern portions of Texas and in the Florida Keys. They run about the same size as Spanish mackerel, but actually no records of their size have been kept because they are so often mistaken for other species of mackerel. However, the Texas Game and Fish Commission reports that one taken off Port Aransas was over 3 feet long and weighed approximately 20 pounds.

Cero mackerel are not important game fish for the inshore fisherman because few of them ever come near shore, preferring deep water. On the outer reefs, also, they are not important game fish, because they will take spoons and other lures or bait when the fishermen are after giants. On these occasions they have the misfortune to be horsed through the water on monster tackle and their tough scrap is wasted.

They can be taken on feathered jigs, on spoons, or strip-cut bait. They also take mullets, menhaden, sardines, shrimps, or small squids. They fight like the other mackerel by striking hard and fast and taking powerful runs with numerous fantastic leaps. Many consider them to be the best eating of all the mackerel.

### Mackerel (King)

Want excitement? Want a fish that strikes like a hellion and runs with the speed of a gazelle? Then king mackerel is your fish. Here is a swift-swimming mackerel that is constantly darting about in the water and couldn't stop swimming if he wanted to. Like other members of the mackerel family, once he stopped swimming, he would sink, since these fish are without swim bladders. Mackerel—especially the kings, which have size, power, and ultra-streamline shape—rank among the fastest swimmers of the ocean.

They are big, up to 76½ pounds (the record), while kings of the 50-pound class are not uncommon and are taken yearly. The average catch varies from 5 to 15 pounds and generally affords the angler all the action and excitement he could hope for.

Kingfish, the only name they are known by in Florida—or cero, or cavalla, or sierra, as they are called in other localities, are not truly an inshore sports fish, because most of them are taken in

offshore waters. But where they are taken, they can easily be reached by any fisherman in a small skiff, provided he has a reliable motor and enjoys trips to the outer reefs.

Kingfish appear in schools on the reefs as they migrate along the Florida shores. During the winter they are found in the southern reaches of the state, in the straits. They move north along both coasts as the weather gets warmer. Finally they distribute themselves throughout the Gulf and along the Atlantic Coast as far north as Maryland, with the biggest concentration from Cape Hatteras south.

Fishing for mackerel is most fun from a skiff. When you head out to their favorite haunts don't expect to see big neon signs announcing their presence. Occasionally they will be feeding and chasing smaller fish, which could be anything from mullet to bluefish, to the surface, but for the most part they can't be sighted. Trolling with a spoon in likely areas is a good way of starting for them. If they are hitting, one is sure to strike this time-tested lure. Another way is to troll a 6-inch strip of fish—usually the underside of a bonito works well. Squid also makes an excellent bait. No matter what you troll, an important point is to use at least 5 feet of steel wire as a leader, because they can cut through anything else.

If the fish are not hitting, experiment by changing your trolling depth. On certain days they stay deep and can't be coaxed up, and then the only way to get action is to get down after them.

For top sport in kingfishing, I suggest using a medium spinning rod with 12- or 20-pound monofilament line. Each explosive run of theirs can be enjoyed fully, because with this equipment the angler can't force his fish. A good trick to use when fishing with the light-test lines is to turn a boat quickly around and run parallel to their hard runs. This aids the fisherman in his fight and takes much pressure off the line. Running with a king mackerel, you get a good idea of their amazing swimming ability and speed.

When fishermen talk about kings they almost always begin by marveling at the way they strike—it's a lightning-bolt smash. A king will strike at the line and hook himself as he strikes, but if

you have a chance, set the hook immediately. With kings there is no time to fool around—you either hook them or you don't. Chances are much better if you strike at the same time. Once he is hooked, your troubles have just begun, for his first run is hard and savage, usually going away from you at an oblique angle. Have the star drag set as tight as you dare, depending on the test strength of the line. If it's too loose he will run all the line from you in seconds.

Another known and respected fact about kings is their ability to spit out hooks. Give one of these fish any slack line and it's good-by fish. I once lost one that hit my line like a tornado. He leaped up like an acrobat and had 40 pounds written all over his long, sleek, silver body. As he struck the water again, instead of swimming away from the boat he came right at the skiff. My companion, who was steering, had automatically turned the boat around and headed for the fish, with the idea of paralleling the fish's run. We didn't realize until too late that we had given him all the slack line he needed for freedom.

After several hard runs, kings have a habit of allowing themselves to be led to the boat, but watch out, because if he gets the slack he wants, it's just another one that got away. Know and respect their cunning at spitting a hook and you will manage to keep more of those you hook.

A good fishing time for kings is when reports are heard that Spanish mackerel are about, as kings seem to follow the trail of these cousins when they migrate. Some of the best known spots are Ft. Meyers, St. Petersburg, Pensacola, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and Wilmington Beach, North Carolina. In Texas they are found by the thousands at Galveston, Freeport, and Port Arthur from March throughout the summer.

Once in a while, a year will come when they stay close to shore in great numbers and suddenly turn up all around the fishing piers. Then the wild scramble for spots on the piers is like a real carnival, with everyone experimenting with ways of taking them. Fifteen- to 20-foot gaffs turn up from nowhere as everyone tries his hand, and no wonder, for these are fish that give any sportsman delight.

### Mackerel (Spanish)

If you walk onto an ocean pier at Galveston and notice that everyone is too busy attending to their rods to even greet you, it's a sure sign that Spanish mackerel are thrashing about. As one of these hard-fighting fish hits a bait, it leaps and swings into action in a wild flurry. Many of the pier fishermen in recent years have switched to a lighter tackle than was formerly used, but the problem of raising a fish ten to fifteen feet out of the water makes sturdy gear still necessary. For mackerel fishing throughout the Gulf many anglers stick to the old-fashioned cane pole which was universal a few years ago. On a crowded pier, just as on a crowded party boat, too light tackle is not regarded as being the best equipment, especially for mackerel, whose run he cannot control, so that his line easily gets tangled with five or six others. A Spanish mackerel on light equipment takes many liberties with the angler. His early runs are hard, short and uncontrollable; therefore, heavier equipment is a must for weekend pier fishing.

Spanish mackerel are generally found wherever the water temperature reaches 60°. This may be only in our most southern waters in the winter months—near the Keys and on the southern coast of Texas. Then, as the water warms up in early springtime, they move north in the Gulf and the Atlantic. March usually starts the migration and by May 1 they are regularly taken throughout the Gulf and in the Atlantic as far up as North Carolina. Some of them venture to the New York and New Jersey shore later in the season. They start south as soon as the water cools and are in their southern haunts by October.

As these fish move, they school up and travel near the ocean surface, feeding on anything that swims within their reach. Their favorite food is menhaden, mullet, shrimp, and squid. Traveling thus, they're hungry and will often strike indiscriminately. Anglers love to hit into a pack of them, for at such times the action is spectacular. You'll hear an angler say, "They'd hit a bare hook if it was trolled through a feeding school."

A Spanish mackerel's hit is fast and is immediately followed by many short, hard, powerful runs with, in many cases, a fine display

of aerial gymnastics, leaping and squirming in an effort to throw the hook. It's a difficult and exciting fish to handle, for as the name Spanish suggests, they are born with a Latin temper which explodes when they are on a hook.

Most mackerel are taken at the reefs by fishermen in charter boats or in their own inboards or outboards. A group of excited gulls chasing bait fish may point out the location of the school of thrashing mackerel. Then all you have to do is troll a spoon near the area. Mackerel can also be taken on feathered jigs, squids or plugs, or spoons of an almost endless variety. Fast trolling seems to bring the best results.

Inshore fishing from a skiff generally starts with trolling and trying to find them. Once they are located, stop the motor and let the boat drift while bait- or spin-casting an assortment of lures to them. Keep the hardware moving fast, for they like flashing objects. They can also be taken by floating live bait; live shrimp is one of the most successful baits. Strip-cut fish, menhaden, mullet, and squids are other baits used. Fly casters have a holiday with mackerel in the inshore waters, taking them with an assortment of bass flies including Gray or Green Drakes or Silver Doctor, on No. 1 to 3 hooks.

The Spanish mackerel is a fighter on any kind of tackle. The usual catch weighs 3 to 4 pounds, but on occasion they go up to 4 feet, weighing 25 pounds. If you catch an 8-pounder, you have a big one. Equipment should be a light or medium rod, 5 to 6 feet in length, with at least 200 yards of line. Medium spinning gear is excellent. A 4-foot wire leader should be attached to the line, and hooks are 3/0 to 5/0, depending on whether the fishing is inshore or out at the reefs.

Mackerel are a soft-fleshed fish, and on an all-day trip it is good to have ice along, as the fish spoil easily. Ice should be brought on any tropical fishing trip. Under a hot sun, fish soon spoil.

Along the beaches of Texas, Louisiana, Florida, and up to the Carolinas Spanish mackerel can also be taken in the surf. Surf fishermen in this area generally do not go for mackerel alone because there is an infinite variety of fish available; but when mackerel are about, they are more than welcome. If a school comes by,

it's wild and exciting. They take any bait the angler has to offer, and if they are anywhere nearby they generally make their presence known by their surface churning of the water, which gives an angler a better chance. He sees them readily and can get right after them.

Along the many bridges over the causeways, mackerel fishing is very much in evidence. A plug thrown into an approaching school fulfills many a fisherman's dream. Sometimes, when this happens, the remainder of the school stay around as though to watch the proceedings and other anglers can get further action. At other times, a fish hooked inshore has just the opposite effect, causing the rest of the fish to make off at breakneck speed.

Spanish mackerel are present along the greatest length of our shoreline. Every mile of the way from Port Isabel, Texas, at the Mexican border, all the way around to the Keys in Florida and right up to the New York shore, these fish are recognized as hard-fighting sports fish.

### Permit

The permit, or giant pompano, is a southern Florida fish that can reach a weight of 50 pounds. The largest ever taken weighed 42 pounds, but 25-pounders are caught regularly. However, the average-sized fish weighs about 10 pounds.

This biggest member of the pompano family has the same spunk and fight as the smaller relative. His first run on being hooked is fast, vicious, and hard, and has snapped many a line. He continues fighting by taking repeated underwater runs, and, like the smaller fish, he is an expert at using tides and currents to gain the necessary leverage to rid himself of the hook.

Permit are found along sandy flats, in inlets and channels. More often the fish is caught over rocky bottoms or other hard bottoms than over soft ground. The areas adjacent to grassy flats may also produce some. Permit are not numerous, and are a prize for the lucky angler who hits into one.

Primarily a Florida Keys fish, permit may be taken at any time of the year. Another excellent area is the lower Gulf coast section

of the state, about as far north as Everglades City. Farther north on the Gulf, they are taken during the summer and fall. Remember, the record catch was at Boca Grande. A Pacific permit is found on the coast of southern California, but is not abundant enough to be a real game fish.

This giant pompano, or Mexican pompano as he is sometimes called, feeds on sand crabs, sand fleas, shrimp, small fish, crawfish, and mollusks. Over a sandy bottom, he grubs the sand for food and can be hooked in such places by an angler working a small yellow jig just off the bottom. The lure has to be retrieved in an uneven jerky motion, allowing the jig to rest on the bottom a second before moving it a few feet. Shrimp make the best live baits.

Medium tackle with spinning rods get the nod over conventional equipment. No. 3/0 or 4/0 hooks are attached to nylon leader. Line should be about 15-pound test. (That record 42-pounder was taken on 12-pound test line—which is what I call *fishing!*)

The permit looks like the common pompano except that he is bigger. He has the same deeply forked tail, but with belly more of an orange color. Like the smaller fish, he is also an excellent table fish, highly prized.

## Pollack

The sleek silver-gray pollack is the hardest-fighting and hand-somest member of the cod family. He is a true sports fish whose reputation has steadily risen in the last dozen years and now ranks with any other fish of the New England area.

Pollack are taken in all the accepted sports-fishing methods. They are caught fishing from the surf, from a skiff, and from cruisers. These fish will come topside to hit at trolled lures as eagerly as they hit baits fished on the bottom.

They are taken from the surf at various places in New England including Monomy Point, Balliston Beach by Provincetown, and Manomet Point in Massachusetts, and an endless number of places along the rocky coast of Maine also provide excellent fishing. Most surf fishing is done at night and the best is when a full moon shines

over the water. On such nights, large schools of fish enjoy coming in close and giving the bait fish a tough time. The best shore pollack fishing always takes place at night; only occasionally are they taken from the surf during the day.

Lures for surf fishing consist of 1- to 1½-ounce plugs of various bright colors. When fishing the plug, let it sit a second or two after it hits the water. Once retrieving is begun, keep the plug moving fast. Hits should be struck gently but firmly for this way the fish is not forced. For some interesting inshore pollack fishing, use a very light spinning outfit right in the surf. A trick worth trying is to let a retrieved lure be pulled back into the surf by the undertow. This will sometimes take those fish that are just waiting for baitfish to be washed back by a retreating wave.

Nighttime is also best when fishing for pollack just off the shore in a skiff. Daytime generally sees smaller catches of inshore fish, called bay pollack. These weigh between 1 and 2 pounds but are fun on very light tackle. The bigger fish are taken at night on colored plugs (often weighted to run a few feet below the surface), spoons, metal jigs, or feathered lures. The best nights are those when the water is calm and the evening is quiet.

Pollack that spook very easily and clodhoppers smashing on a boat deck will cause a school of them to dive to the deep. One night while we were out, we could see them breaking water all around us but we couldn't get a thing to hit. Finally our captain had an idea and we stopped and began casting to them. They hit those lines as if there was no tomorrow, and only then did we realize why they hadn't hit before. The propeller had been bent from collision with a log that day and was making an uneven, strange noise which was spooking these fish.

Inshore bay fishing can be done with a light fresh-water spinning tackle and 5-pound test line. It is tremendously exciting and wonderful practice for learning how to take a fish without horsing him. This kind of practice might mean the difference between establishing a light-tackle record or just another broken line.

If the angler takes just such a trip and on his first fish has the reaction, "Why did I listen to that nut?"—well, I sympathize with him. To tell the truth, that was exactly my own reaction as I



watched my rod bend and twist like a willow in a hurricane. But I held on grimly and when it was finally over I realized I'd just enjoyed some pretty hectic sport.

Cruisers go out two miles and more for the pollack, to troll or fish for them off the bottom. Trolling principles are about the same except that the fish are usually larger, 15-pounders being common. Out there, trolling is generally done with a weighted lure running 5 to 15 feet under the surface. Fish strips or pork rinds are sometimes added to the lure. In the northern regions of Maine, big codfish sometimes come up and hit the trolled lure.

Bottom fishing for pollack is the same as bottom fishing for cod; the fish are found together. In codfishing, the moment the first pollack comes up, add extra hooks to your line above the sinker and fix them so that they ride 5 to 10 feet above the bottom. Hooks are added because pollack seldom stay on the bottom but generally swim just above it.

The farther north one goes the better the pollack fishing is, and fishing out of towns like Calais or Eastport, you won't find any area to equal Maine. Still, when pollack come south, they come in great schools, and spring fishing in southern Massachusetts or out of eastern Long Island on Cox's ledge is very productive.

A word of caution about pollack: They should be cleaned and iced as soon as possible. They are a delicious fish—tender sweet and bone-free. A 15-pounder filleted into two huge steaks make a broiled meal supreme.

Ever since the trend to light tackle began, pollack fishing has been on the upswing. I predict that in years to come the silver pollack will continue to keep rising on the sportsman's totem pole. The only thing I can't understand is why he has been overlooked for so long.

### Pompano

Common pompano are caught in the Florida Keys, along the Atlantic Coast as far north as Cape Hatteras and throughout the American section of the Gulf. In the northern reaches of the fish's

activity, he is primarily a summer fish, running gaily in the inshore waters right next to the beaches. Some come as far north as Cape Cod, but this is exceptional. They cannot be considered common to the Middle Atlantic waters.

The pompano is a small fish but many anglers say it is a fish with a pedigree. The biggest may grow to 8 pounds, but the size an angler can regularly expect to take is 1 to 3 pounds.

A fly rod or a light spinning rod makes the fishing interesting. They should be fished right in the surf where schools of them can often be seen scurrying about. Pompano tend to stay at the breaker point while they swim about looking for bits of food that have been cast around in the turbulent sea. Small pieces of shrimp or sand crabs make excellent bait.

In the Bahamas and Bermuda a specialized method of pompano fishing has been developed, by soaking a loaf of very fresh bread in sardine oil. This mixture is broken up and dipped in beach sand so that it is weighted down, then spread around a beach area while the angler keeps putting a small piece of it (fresh, pasty bread is necessary, because it will hold to the hook best) on a 1/0 hook. A split shot sinker and a float can be used if desired. This method works fine on our beaches too, and when the schools are about, a mess of fish can always be picked up this way.

If slightly heavier equipment is used, such as a medium spinning rod with good action, sinkers are also good. The best baits for this kind of surf fishing are sand crabs, which are hooked by pushing the hook in from the underside of the crab and not letting it protrude. Shrimp also make good baits. Standard surf rigs are usual. I prefer the wading method with fly rods, but either way produces fish.

Fast action is the byword for pompano because these fish will charge a line. No pompano has ever been known to nibble on a bait, simply because the pompano has no teeth. Therefore, he goes after a bait with gusto, to get it into his nutcracker-like mouth and crush it. The inside of the pompano's mouth is hard as a rock.

Pompano is an underwater runner when he fights. He will run toward reefs, rocks, or coral in an attempt to cut line. He makes

hurried excited runs paralled to the beach, but it is while the fish is in the breakers that the biggest chance of losing him occurs. He will ride a wave in and then quickly turn and use the undertow for leverage in an attempt to tear the hook free. All in all, he is the toughest little fighter in the ocean; ounce for ounce no other fish compares with him. A 3-pounder gives a fly-rod fisherman so much trouble that he sometimes regrets not using a tuna rod.

A favored way to take these fish is with artificials, using light colored nylon jigs. These are cast and allowed to sink to the sand, then retrieved a few feet and permitted to sink again, repeating until one hits. Pompano are also popular with bridge and pier fishermen, and even with small-boat men trolling weighted artificials close to the beach. They are apt to be found about inlets, at river mouths, and near the banks of tidal rivers.

Other species of the pompano is also taken in Florida waters; these include permit, African pompano, and the round pompano, often confused with the common pompano. These are found mostly in the southern waters of the state.

Catching pompano isn't the end of the angler's pleasure. They are an epicure's delight. Famous restaurants up and down the coast invariably include pompano on their menus. Any fish that can bring the prices they command must be good. Try one broiled.

## Porgies

The best way to a porgie's heart is through his stomach—which is a darn good way to get these little guys in a pot. They are among the most abundant species on the East Coast, and hold a high place of esteem among gourmets.

Porgies come in two sizes: sea porgies that run from 1 to 3 pounds and sand porgies that weigh only  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 1 pound. The smaller members rush into the inland waters all along the coast from North Carolina up to Cape Cod, where they make excellent summer sport for the rowboat boys and the gentlemen of the piers.

Inshore or offshore porgies act the same way; they spread themselves over the bottom, never seeming too particular about the type of bottom they choose. Sometimes they are over mud, sand, or

rocks, but no matter where, they always seem ready to take bait. Along the coast from June through September, porgies can be caught by the sackful.

A porgy will take squid (especially good bait because it also entices big fluke roving the same waters) skimmer clams, mussels, shrimp, or cut fish.

Party-boat captains must know their porgy hot spots to be worth their salt. If other fish are not hitting, many a captain has been saved from mutiny by moving over to a porgy haven. Here he can always count on giving his customers the action they crave. Within a few minutes the fish start coming aboard one and two or even three on a line.

For the fisherman traveling alone without professional help, a good idea is to start a day of fishing by first drifting. When hits are scored quickly, anchor the boat at that spot. A bucket of mossbunker chum never hurts activity either. Likely places are over wrecks, reefs, or shellfish beds.

Tackle depends on whether the fishing is inshore or offshore. Fish under a pound, of course, calls for the light practical equipment, and even the offshore 3-pounders do not require anything much heavier. Offshore, the danger in using tackle that is too light is that another bigger and heavier species might scramble it to bits. Then too, occasionally 5-pound porgies are taken; in fact, they are known to go up to 8 pounds.

Hooks for porgies are O'Shaughnessy or Sproat hooks of sizes 4 to 6 for bay porgies and 1/0 to 4/0 for offshore fish. Two, three, or even four hooks attached to a 1½-foot leader are standard. Monofilament line is best because these fish are slightly line-shy.

A way to lure fish to a line is to gently walk a sinker. Do this by moving it off the bottom about a foot and then dropping it down again. This helps rile up a soft bottom and the motion naturally arouses their curiosity.

When a porgy hits, he hits like a machine gun—a series of sharp nips. Set the hook quickly with an easy flip of the wrist, moving the rod tip up about a foot. Don't be discouraged if you lose many; this is part of the sport. Their enthusiasm brings them back swiftly,

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and before you know it you will have caught an uncountable number.

A porgy fights hard and continues scrapping all the way. He fights on his side, getting his body into the scrap. Nets are not necessary, as they seldom fall off the hook.

The porgies' breeding season is May and early June, during which time they are too busy for food. The female lays up to half a million eggs, so it's no wonder fish are plentiful. In the winter porgies stay in deep water.

It's not size or cunning that make the porgy sought after so much as his taste. Out of the frying pan he is appetizing enough to make my Irish friend Patrick O'Shaughnessy like fish. Taste one sautéed in butter or broiled and you will never turn down a couple of hours of porgy fishing.

### Porgies (Southern)

The southern porgy is found from Cape Hatteras south and throughout the Gulf of Mexico. They are caught in the same general manner as the northern species and the only difference is that they are fished with baits more favorable to southern waters. The best baits are small live shrimp (dead ones may bring hits too) and hermit crab. The fish weigh from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to a pound, 2-pounders being considered monsters. Like their northern relative they are excellent eating.

### Salmon (Atlantic)

The Atlantic salmon is a thoroughbred. Although a dying species in the States, this is the king of coastal sports fish—the fish that anglers say is killed rather than caught, so terrifying is his fight, for he comes into the angler only when he is so thoroughly exhausted that he can no longer swim.

What has happened to the wonderful Atlantic salmon on our coast is a crime of civilization. At one time this fish swam majestically into all the rivers from the Delaware northward to Canada. Henry Hudson told of seeing the Hudson River thick with salmon. The Passaic and Connecticut rivers all harbored salmon until the

filth of onrushing civilization drove them farther and farther north. Today only a few rivers in Maine are listed as salmon rivers. They are the Penobscot, Narraguagus, Dennys, Pleasant, Machias, East Machias, and Orange rivers. But even in these last strongholds the pickings are lean, each giving up less than one hundred fish a year.

I vacationed in Maine recently and wandered through country that was once salmon land. Nowhere did I hear Atlantic salmon even mentioned. But sportsmen venerate these fish and cheer what efforts are now being undertaken to bring them back. The state of Maine has hired marine biologists who are beginning to make some headway. Although there seems less than 50 per cent chance that salmon will survive in our country, we all wish them Godspeed in their work.

Because the Pacific salmon die in fresh water after spawning, people have always felt they would disappear as a species faster than their Atlantic cousins. On the contrary, the Atlantic salmon comes into fresh water every spring and spends the whole summer in an area where he is vulnerable to birds, fishermen, and dirt which is poison to him. Pacific salmon live in the comparative safety of the sea and only take one real trip to fresh water—their last; therefore, their chance for survival is much better.

A marvelous book on Atlantic salmon that clearly illustrates their beauty and dignity is *Atlantic Salmon* by Lee Wulff (A.S. Barnes, 1958). I recommend this book by a writer who is so famous a salmon authority that a whole set of the best fly patterns have been named for him.

The fish are taken by fly fishing in the rivers and in deep pools in streams. They are taken from canoes, boats, or by wading the streams. Catching a salmon is hard, grueling work, for when they arrive from the sea they are not feeding and must be teased to take a fly. An angler can spend a frustrating hour dropping fly after fly over the head of a big one and get nothing for his efforts. If the fish isn't spooked, he moves up to the fly slowly. He must be given time to take the fly before you raise the rod to strike him. Once hooked, his majesty declares war, and it is like a medieval melodrama—so fanatic is his fight.

Salmon tackle usually consists of 9-foot salmon fly rod and a whole set of salmon flies.

Fishing for them is such fine sport that it is worth a trip to New Brunswick or Maine for a single prize.

### Sheepshead

The sheepshead is one of the most sought after bottom fish of the Southern Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The fish is found in great numbers south of Cape Hatteras all the way down. In the lower reaches of Florida they become scarce, but in the Gulf area sheepshead are among the most abundant bottom fish.

This angular fish with its contrasting dark and light striped sides will at times weigh 25 pounds, but the average specimen weighs only 1 or 2 pounds. They are taken by bridge, dock, or rowboat fishermen working rocky bottoms, wrecks, or pilings. A sure place to get a mess of them is over oyster beds in the bays. Chum, in the form of crushed fiddler crabs or barnacles dropped over a rocky bottom brings them hurrying about and charging lines. The fiddler crabs are more successful as baits.

Sheepshead is an irritating fish to go after, because he is primarily a nibbler, taking bait only with his front teeth. With this fish, the angler who waits for a good bite will quickly become the chief benefactor of the sheepshead tribe, because the fish will nibble him to death. A jerk of the wrist, raising the rod tip swiftly, is necessary to hook them. Even the big fish of the species merely nibble. Fishing near Jacksonville, Florida, on one occasion, I felt the lightest possible touch on my line and when I raised my rod tip, somewhat irritated at my miserable luck, suddenly my rod bent in half. I had hooked an 8-pounder that had seemed nothing more than a bait fish.

Once a sheepshead is hooked, it's a different story, for he fights in short hard runs that zigzag all over the bay. They are scrappy all the way up.

A stiff 6- to 9-ounce bay rod that doesn't bend on a hard yank is practical equipment. No. 1 to No. 7 Virginia hooks should be attached to a short piece of wire leader. A fish-finder rig helps

the angler keep his bait down on pay dirt and also is the best way to warn against thievery. I sometimes wonder if their other name, prison fish, is owed to their stripes or to of their thieving propensity.

Lake Pontchartrain, which the city of New Orleans borders, has a clan of anglers who rate sheepshead above all other fish. These men—and they include lawyers and millionaires—get out in their little boats and fish near the railroad tracks where the sheepshead always lurk. Every day of the year some of the clan are out there, forgoing the big tarpon and weakfish runs of the lake for their favorite sports fish, sheepshead.

Other places will find avid sheepshead fishermen too. They are popular with the shore sportsmen because they are available all year; they are scrappy, and they are good eating. Any southern cracker will tell you how delicious they are when skinned.

### Snook

The snook is every ounce a game fish, and if these ounces should total up to 20 pounds they mean an hour of the toughest fighting imaginable to the light-tackle angler. The common-sized snook weighs 2 to 5 pounds but specimens weighing 49 pounds have been taken in Florida, while a 52-pounder from the Pacific coast of Panama holds the record.

The snook is such a highly thought of fish that anglers in Florida have fought to have him protected by game laws. Today, four is the daily bag limit. Primarily a Florida fish, snook can be taken on the shores along most of the state. Texas has snook in quantity near Port Isabel and north along the coast to Port Aransas; also, southern California has some near San Diego.

The ubiquitous snook can be found on the bottom, topside, on a reef, in a channel, a bay, inlet and bayou, and often even in fresh water. The angler can hook them from almost anywhere; from boats, bridges, beaches, and banks of creeks. They are taken with heavy tackle, medium tackle, spinning rods, and bait-casting or fly rods, but no matter how they are taken one thing is sure—they always fight hard.

The snook will come into the inland water far into creeks and



fresh-water drainage canals, where they lie in wait for minnows which they devour by the ton. For inshore fishing a fly rod and a half-white bucktail fly should be fished in the current and about a foot or two under the surface. Fresh-water crayfish or minnows are also excellent bait.

Float the fly or bait down to the fish, which will be sitting at the edge of a turn waiting for his dinner. Once he takes it he will break surface and twist, jump, and carry on the fight in all directions. His annoying specialty is to get the line miserably twisted in out-cropping roots so that he can get leverage and rip the hook from his mouth. On hooking one, the angler should if possible steer the fight away from roots, for the fish will surely head for them. Once a snook gets line wound in there, one in fifty are caught. The angler's only hope is to give plenty of slack line and hope the fish unwinds the tangle.

Inshore fishing for snook will bring alligator gar to the line regularly, but they can be avoided by getting the fly lower in the water, because the gar are usually near the surface. Snook in inshore waters are a darker color than those of the ocean. The backwater snook have a brownish back and a tan or golden belly.

In the bays, snook have a tan back and silvery belly, and can be taken from the beach or from a boat. Near the headwaters of rivers and inlets of the Everglades, on the Gulf, boat fishermen troll 4- to 6-inch spoons. They troll slowly to allow the fish time to come up from the bottom to smash at the spoon. Line should be monofilament of 20- to 30-pound test. Yellow-feathered jigs trolled 50 to 100 feet behind the boat are productive. Sometimes, especially during the heat of day, deep trolling is the most effective way to get them. A favored trolled lure on the East Coast is the eelskin.

A popular method of catching the big ones is to anchor a boat near a channel leading into a bay. Find a spot where the water runs swiftly over a sand bar and then curls into an eddy over a deeper dead spot. Bait a live shrimp on a 5/0 hook, weigh it down with about ¼-ounce weight and let the teaser drift into the hole. If the big snook who won't come into the bays are down there waiting for food, your rod will soon be in for a severe test. This kind of fishing is the specialty for getting 10- to 30-pounders.

Snook are not daytime feeders but prefer to feed at dusk and at night. During the day the fish seek out deep holes or slip under the mangrove limbs where it is shady and quiet. The snook is a gentlemen who prefers deep shady places to rest during the day, seeking out quiet water where dinner is swished to him by nature, rather than places where he has to go chasing it himself. Keep this point in mind: Look for places where bait fish might get pushed in a hole, then fish it, and your chances for getting a snook are good.

The man fishing from shore uses various methods of catching snook. From the beaches, surf casters sometimes tie into a school of them moving along the beach edges to their spawning grounds. These runs are most often encountered in the lower Gulf regions in the spring. Here, anglers will cast out to catch some, then they hurry by car, beach buggy, or even horseback up the beach in the direction of the passing school and quickly set up shop for another try at the school.

Bait casters rate snook the number one fish of the nation, for they offer a sport almost perfect for bait casting. Their fight, the waters they frequent, and the lusty way they smash a plug are all ideal for this kind of sport. At times snook will hit almost any plug thrown at them and many a bass fisherman who has thrown a popper plug at them quickly spends the next several weeks trying to cure a bad case of snook fever.

When a popping bug lands on the surface let it sit ten to twenty seconds before retrieving. Give it a few hard yanks and let it sit again, then continue this action all the way in. Snook will hit the plug while it is standing still or moving. They sit below and eye the plug until it gets them so annoyed they just have to come up and belt it. Other surface plugs should also be retrieved in a jerky manner to get the best action. Moonlit nights are deadly times to work surface plugs. Hot spots are the Indian River section of Florida where the north and south fork of the St. Lucie River gives a fisherman ample opportunity to try this method.

Spin fishermen who work these same waters have best results with weighted yellow bucktail and a large assortment of other spinning lures. If the lures are weighted, they can be worked in

and under the mangroves where they are effective in taking fish during the day.

Snook fishing is also done around pilings, piers, or from bridges. Here, sturdy bay rods are generally used and live baits are most productive. Crabs, shrimp, mullet, or other small fish are the baits to use. Sometimes the fish will be seen below the bridges of the Keys and they will smash at anything dropped, but at other times they won't touch a thing. When a 30-pounder sits down below you and you try to wake him up with an assortment of delicacies that don't interest him, it is the most tantalizing thing in the world, and there isn't a thing you can do about it.

No matter what the method of fishing, remember to use steel wire leader. These fish have extremely sharp gill covers which can cut line easily. Hooks should be anywhere from 4/0 to 9/0, depending on the size of fish running.

When fighting a snook, the angler must always keep on the alert and not get too excited by the wild action going on in the water. The fish have soft mouths, and many an overanxious fisherman has lost a big one when excitement caused him to horse the fish.

On the coast of Florida there are four known species of snook. Throughout the world over a dozen species have been identified by the long concave snout and the long dark lateral line that runs from gills to tail. They are also called sergeant fish because of this stripe. In Mexico and along the southern Texas coast they are known as robalo.

The snook is a good eating fish that has flaky white flesh. It should be skinned and filleted before cooking. The small fish are better eating than very large ones.

With their fast attack and sensational fighting ability, snook are all sports—every fighting ounce of them.

## Tarpon

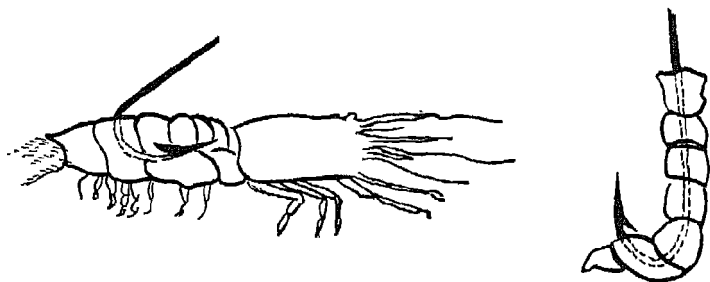
Hooking into a tarpon isn't a very difficult task, but to hook and boat one is a real day's work. There isn't any other sports fish anywhere that throws a hook so violently. He does it so expertly that he is recognized as one of the most difficult fish to land.

These fish, "the siver kings of the South," fight differently from any other. They don't fight the line but exert themselves madly battling the hook. A hook in a tarpon's mouth is his mortal enemy and he savagely attacks it. His fighting spirit is aroused and he thrashes the water, making leap after leap trying to spit it out. A tarpon's kind of fight makes him a sportsman's delight because the lightest of light tackle can be used, with fly rods and bait-casting rods also popular.

Tarpon are salt-water fish that breed in the Caribbean and migrate to all the tropical and semitropical waters of the Americas. They are abundant in our Gulf states and along the southern portion of the Atlantic seaboard. When they enter our waters each spring the small young fish head up the rivers, while the older fish stay in the lower parts of the rivers and in tidal waters. Some specimens weigh more than 200 pounds—biggest of all inshore fish.

They tend to school together at the river mouths and look very peaceful, but ask any fisherman who has ever hooked a 50-pounder what can happen. When a tarpon hits the hook, look out. The first thing he does is smash out of the water like a bolt of lightning. From his first leap every motion the fish makes has just one purpose—to escape the hook. I believe that four out of five tarpon manage to dislodge it with their violent attack. Tarpon have been known to jump into boats. I've seen them get a fisherman's line tangled in an overhanging tree. Imagine a hundred pounds of fish acting like a wild bronco and you get some notion of this terrific sport.

My favorite spot for fishing for the silver kings is in Florida, where I am partial to the Indian River or the mangrove swamps of the Everglades. I like to get out in a small skiff with medium-light tackle and being to troll. For this kind of fishing, live bait works wonders. Tie on a small mullet or pinfish and slowly move around, letting the line work downriver. I try to work it into the spots they are likely to be. If I see one or a shadow of one, I work above him and let my line drift down to the school where I know he must surely be. As the mullet slowly drifts into their midst it usually entices one of their number to awake from his deathlike trance and smash at the bait.



LEFT: *Tail-hooking a shrimp.* RIGHT: *A shrimp threaded on a hook.*  
One or more small shrimp are generally threaded on a hook.

When a tarpon takes live bait, always let him have it before setting the hook. The only danger is waiting too long and, as a result, getting a gut-hooked fish. Since tarpon are poor eaters, it is a complete waste to hook a fish in this manner it takes the sport of the fight right out of one of America's top fighting game fish.

When I hook one on live bait I usually count three, very slowly, or a more rapid ten if I'm excited, before I strike my line. Simultaneous with my strike I prepare myself for the series of explosive leaps that are sure to come. As the crazed fish makes his maddening effort to free himself, I inevitably forget all my fishing theories. In the excitement of the battle the only thing I seem to remember in desperation is to prevent slack. With these notorious hook throwers, slack means a lost fish. And when it comes to losing them, I've lost my share. Slack line allows the fish to pull out enough line to enable him to spit out the hook.

Tarpon fishing is a sport as varied as the moods of the fish themselves. It can be done in salt water, in fresh water, by still fishing, shore fishing, or fishing from a boat. Baits can be either live or artificial. It seems these fish are born mean and hungry and are always ready to strike at a meal. For still fishing, a shrimp or crab on a line that gets out to them by casting or drifting usually brings results. Other good still-fishing baits include the same mullets or pinfish I use in trolling. As a matter of fact, with tarpon practically any small fish or simply strips of fish will draw strikes.

Plugs and streamer plugs work with these babies too. When they strike a plug near surface they usually knock it clean out of the water; and if they happen to miss the hook, the plug sometimes goes flying fifteen feet through the air—just to give some idea of their ferocity. For plug fishing I like a split plug fished with very light tackle. This brand of fishing works equally well from shore or from a boat, and is good with the great variety of plugs made for this duty.

It must be said that tarpon will, and do, take practically any bait or lure offered. Add to that the fact they are poor eating, which makes one wonder why in the world they are such prized sports fish. Well, it all boils down to one word, *fight!* Pound for pound—and they are big—with the Florida record 210 pounds against the world record of 280 pounds, there isn't a harder fighter at any weight. It's as a friend of mine said, "the best damn deep-sea fishing there is, and it's right offshore."

### Weakfish (Gray)

The common weakfish hits a line with gusto and then takes off at a fast clip, leaving the angler with one of the most difficult runs to break. If the angler forces the line even the slightest, he knows it is a missed fish, for the hook will tear loose from the tissue-soft mouth. If he lets the run continue, that doesn't catch fish either, so he has to break a running fish by exerting pressure in very slight degrees, often only by applying his thumb to the whirring line. Try this trick with an angry 8-pounder and I guarantee, once your thumb heals, you'll be out for them every chance you get.

The common weakfish, or gray weakfish, is found on the Atlantic Coast from Chesapeake Bay north to Cape Cod. A few go farther north, just as some will appear south as far as Florida. In the Chesapeake Bay area, there is good fishing from April until November, while in New Jersey, New York, and southern New England they run from the end of April until October. Usually the first cold weather means the end of the weakfishing season, when they move offshore.

Famous weakfishing spots around this area include Nantucket

Sound, Massachusetts; Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island; the Connecticut and Long Island shores of Long Island Sound; Great Peconic Bay, New York; Barnegat, New Jersey; Delaware Bay; and the very popular Chesapeake Bay. The record fish, a 17½ pounder, was taken from the Mullica River, New Jersey.

Weakfish are both topside and bottom fish. At times they scrounge along the bottom looking for crustaceans and sea worms, while at other times they rise to the top and hunt such prey as killies, spearing, and similar bait fish.

When they are on top they must be fished with a line leader and hook combination. Sproat hooks of 1/0 or 2/0 size are excellent. A 3- or 4-foot piece of nylon leader and line of 5-pound strength make up the business end. Reels should be No. 1/0 on which a star drag is optional. As for rods, the 5½-foot weakfish rod is ideally suited.

Begin top fishing by anchoring the boat several hundred feet from where fishing is planned. Make sure the current or tide is running toward the chosen spot and begin to chum. Grass shrimp are used for chum—four or five of them should be dropped over the side at intervals of a few feet. The shrimp must be fresh—live, preferably; but first pinch their heads, otherwise they dart away instead of drifting.

Bait the hook by attaching it through the back of a shrimp and then let it out in the chum line. Other baits used can be blood-worms or sand worms. The baits should be extended freely in the chum line 250 to 300 feet from the boat. When a chum line is first started, the fish will be far out, coming close as they are lured in for their dinner.

Chum-line fishing is best near shore and over flats or on oyster beds where the water is fairly shallow. Here the fish are shy of a boat and are easily spooked, especially at times when they can be seen with their dorsal fins out of the water. Other times they are farther down and may be at any level in the water. If several are fishing it is a good plan to start fishing at different depths, each line weighted differently so that they ride at various levels. In a very swift current a weight of ½ to 2 ounces and a plastic float are sometimes necessary to correctly set the depth.

Generally, when the fish strike the bait they hook themselves. No fishing knowledge is needed then, but at other times weakfish get in a nibbling mood and only nose at their favorite dinners. A natural tendency of the novice then is to tighten up a line at each nibble. This is the worst thing he can do. When a weakfish nibbles, the angler does far better to let out line to keep the bait drifting in a natural motion. Sometimes 10 to 30 feet of line is necessary to coax the trailing weakfish to take the bait. Another trick is to jerk the bait toward you suddenly; this sometimes tempts the fish to snap at it. Jerking bait should only be done when the fish are around the bait but are not nibbling, as it frightens a fish to have the bait pulled out of their mouths.

The art of drifting a bait out to the fish calls for skill in making one shrimp stand out from all the others. It is done by drifting the bait a distance, then stopping it and even retrieving a few feet before letting it out again. Repeat this action until the fish catches on. Occasionally hooks with pearl squids attract more fish to the line than plain hooks; therefore, they are always worth a try.

When the weaks are scrounging around the bottom a different set of fishing principles applies. First, the equipment must be rigged for the bottom with a sinker heavy enough to hold bottom but still able to drift freely with the movement of the tide. Above the sinker are two or three feet of nylon leader attached to a swivel. Two or three feet farther up is another swivel with a second hook attached. The rod and line are generally the same as for top fishing because the fisherman can't be sure that the fish will be high or low and he should be prepared for both eventualities. A good complete tackle box takes care of that department.

When the bait is lowered over the side and hits bottom the angler should immediately get his bait in motion. Lift it up and let it drift out along the bottom a few yards. Keep repeating this activity until the line is worked out to its safe limits.

Bottom fishing also calls for chum, continued throughout the time fished. Five or six quarts of shrimp are usually required for the day's fishing. They are expensive, but often shrimp may be mixed with other marine life to form the chum line, such as chopped-up pieces of bergalls, porgies, or sea bass. The important



point is to get the fish chopped up fine so that the bait doesn't go out in large chunks. It is the oil oozing out of small pieces that entices fish, which is why chum ground up fine is best.

Bottom baits start with shrimp as the number one favorite. After that come small pieces of fish, including sea robin, mossbunker, porgy, or pin bass. Large live killies are a bait no fish can resist and often bring in the biggest fish of the day. Weaks will also take clams and shedder crab when they are feeding. It is generally a good idea to have several kinds of bait available, because sometimes they simply refuse certain baits. However, for best results all bait should be fresh.

Jigging a bright squid on the bottom is a productive way to fish for weaks. It is not necessary to bait the jig. The motion is what makes the fish hit.

There are two other standard methods of weakfishing, namely, surf fishing or trolling. Trolling is particularly effective around Long Island Sound, Cape Cod, and off the Jersey coast, where large weaks are often picked up while an angler is busy working for stripers. Small spoons or diving surface plugs are effective when trolling.

Surf casters hit into large weaks in rips, channels, inlets, or bays. In years when the blues are scarce the weakfish take over the favorite blue haunts where surf casters hit into them regularly. A medium rod and fish-finder rigs are standard equipment for surf casting.

The weakfish is a known hard hitter whose first run is always dangerous and furious. Once you stop him, his fight tends to wane and he can probably be pulled in while he sulkily follows the line. Even then he is dangerous, for he is known for his sudden spurts and dives which in many instances win him his freedom as he rips off the hook. A weak must be played with the rod tip and not with reel gymnastics. Easy does it all the way for them—all the way into the landing net, which is a must.

A gray, or northern, weakfish is a handsome fellow with gray or orange-yellow pelvic fins and dark blotches that run obliquely along the sides.

There is a big demand for weakfish. They bring excellent prices

in fish markets, being a table delicacy. The weaks seem to be a cyclical fish and, like the bluefish, it is either feast or famine with them. But even in the leanest years, sports fishermen along the coast always stand ready to drop shrimp at the first hint of these fine sports fish in the vicinity.

### Weakfish (Southern)

When a fisherman hits into a weakfish, it means that he is in for a day of terrific fishing, because these fish move in large schools and, if one is taken, the others are ready for action.

There are three species of weakfish in southern waters and still another species in the cooler waters of the Middle Atlantic states. The favorite southern weak is the spotted weakfish, or spotted sea trout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*), which is found throughout the Gulf and on the Atlantic Coast north to Chesapeake Bay. The other two members of the southern weakfish group are the sand weakfish (*Cynoscion arenarius*), found only on the Gulf coast, and the silver weakfish (*Cynoscion nothus*), which has the same range as the spotted weak.

The three species are easily identified by their different size and appearance. The silver weakfish is the smallest of the group, with 2-pounders extremely scarce, most weighing under a pound. This weakfish has pale coloration and, if it has the traditional trout spots, they are pale and faded. The sand weakfish is identified by its complete lack of dark spots, and is known for the bright colors on its back and sides, with a silver belly. This handsome fish is called sea trout in many areas. The sand weak is smaller than the spotted sea trout and seldom weighs more than a pound, although occasionally it may attain a weight of 3 pounds.

The spotted weakfish is the true sports fish of this group, ranking as one of the most popular inshore fish in the country. These sea trout can be taken on fresh water equipment, using spinning rods and fly rods. Five-pound test monofilament line is excellent. Slip out into the water at any of the Indian River beaches of east Florida, start throwing a weighted yellow bucktail out onto the flats, and you have a good chance of hitting some of the biggest

weaks in the state. The bucktail should be worked back to the angler in short jerky motions in imitation of shrimp. When buying a lure for tropical fishing, choose one in yellow, the natural color of many tropical baits.

Hot spots for the spotted sea trout on the East Coast include the St. Johns River section; St. Augustine; and the Biscayne Bay area south of Miami. On the Gulf coast, excellent catches are taken at Charlotte Harbor, Tampa Bay, and Pensacola Bay, Florida; Mobile Bay, Alabama; Biloxi, Mississippi; Lake Pontchartrain, Louisiana; and the entire Laguna Madre in Texas. In short, there is good sea-trout fishing in practically every warm-water bay in the area. Large schools of trout swim along the northern Gulf sections starting in October and lasting through the spring.

Mobile Bay, Alabama, takes great pride in its weakfish run, holding an annual contest at Bon Secour, where prizes are given out for record catches. Most of the fishing in the bay is from boats where anglers search out the schools. The oyster beds at Cedar Point are always a sure place to find weaks and often they are so thick that a sinker isn't even necessary, they'll come right up and take bait almost as soon as it hits the water.

Sea-trout schools run into bayous and creeks where they can easily be caught by anglers. Trolling a spoon, spinner, plug, or jig at the edges of a school until a sea trout strikes is the best way to begin. If the fish are about but won't take the lure, change off until a productive one is found, then keep circling the school, picking off one fish at a time. Never cut through a school; that could be the end of the festivities. At times the bucktail fly works wonders in these backwater areas but then it is best to drift for them. Backwater fishing reaches its height during a cold snap when the fish run into the streams looking for warmer water. The bayou fish are generally a darker color than their bay relatives but they remain just as scrappy on a hook.

Weakfish are named for the soft fleshy mouth, which is readily ripped by any strain exerted. Hooks tear from it easily, and because of that the fish is a constant problem to pier and bridge anglers, who must lift a struggling fish some twenty to thirty feet in the air.

Inshore fishermen have found that weakfish should be hooked deep to be taken without losing them off the hook. Live-bait fishing is the best assurance to hook a fish deep, and shrimp is the favorite bait. A shrimp is attached through its back to a 1/0 or 2/0 hook and lowered into the water. Floats are used because they are the best indicators of strikes. When a fish hits and pulls the bobbin, down it plunges, and the line merely has to be tightened to set the hook. The hook should be set by pulling the rod back in a smooth, even motion, thereby implanting it securely for the tough pull ahead.

Weakfish are exciting and carry on a spirited underwater scrap that gains momentum as it progresses. Some of the big ones will take long runs that snap lines, but the most ordinary way of losing weaks is by horsing a fish. These fishes' mouths are paper-soft; they absolutely cannot be horsed but have to be worked in. A landing net is a necessary aid, because it eliminates the chance of losing a fish when lifting him over the side. The soft mouth gives the fisherman one advantage: when a school of fish are about he can remove a hook from a weakfish instantly.

Although the weakfish is called a trout and looks like one, it is actually a member of the croaker family. A hardy fish, they seem to survive the heavy fishing pressure on them. The prolific weak is capable of laying a million eggs a year, so they will probably be with us for some time to come.

The very large weaks have a tendency to break away from the school and stay near beaches and passes seeking their food. Three friends of mine knew a spot where some big ones could usually be counted on. It was just at the tip of a bay where several sand bars paralleled the entrance of the pass. They waded out past the first bar onto the second, going for the hole beyond. The water they were standing in was about chest high, and here they met another supper searcher—7-foot hammerhead shark. His huge dorsal fin pointed up as he swam right among the group. Any one of them could have reached out and touched it. The boys turned tail and shot out for shore and, as my friend insists, none of them touched water the whole distance in. I'm just as glad I wasn't with them

that day but I would have paid money to see them making for shore.

Weakfish are excellent to start a youngster fishing. They can be taken with no more equipment than a cane pole, a hook, and a few shrimp for bait. If shrimp are not available, mullet, menhaden, silversides, or even small chunks of cut fish do very nicely. In some sections of Florida when the fish are not biting, one technique used is to beat the water soundly a few times with the pole. Weaks are inquisitive and the sound will attract them. These fish are plentiful, and anyone from a rank novice on up can get a fair share with the simplest of equipment and knowledge. No wonder they are so popular with inshore sportsmen.

Weaks have a tendency to dry out rather quickly; therefore, fish should be brought to the pot as soon after catching as possible. If they can be kept alive until an hour or two before eating they are as succulent a fish as ever hit the pan.

**Part IV**  
*Pacific Species*



## Bass (Kelp)

Kelp bass is to West Coast fishermen what sea bass and porgy are to the Easterners. It is a fish that is always around and one that takes bait readily. When fishing in boats and the going is slow, anglers will quickly head for the kelp beds to pick up some bass for their creel.

The pressure on these fish was so great that catches in postwar years steadily dwindled until the state of California made it illegal to keep fish under 10½ inches, also enacting a bag limit of ten fish per day in an effort to restore these fine fish to their former prominence.

Kelp bass are not migratory fish; they tend to stay all their lives in a local area. Therefore, when a particular area gets fished out it stays that way until their numbers are replenished. With kelp bass and all other fish it is important to be a sportsman and keep only what will be used; after all, with population increases and greater fishing pressures, we must all be conservation-minded if present fishing levels are to be maintained.

I remember not too many years ago when you could go out to a kelp bed and just drop lines over the side to get action. Things have changed, though; now the bass seem shyer and boats generally set up a chum line to bring in enough fish to create activity.

But when a bass hits, it wriggles back and forth and darts off, running the angler's line into the kelp beds. Big bass love to bully the lines and tangle them so hopelessly in the kelp that it would take a troop of boy scouts three weeks to unravel the mess. When this happens every angler knows the fish is lost and the only thing he can hope is to save some line; by giving the fish the slack he needs to bolt the hook.

The favorite tackle for the fish is medium spinning gear with 15-pound test line. Hooks are No. 2 and are attached to the line



by thin wire leader. The wire leader on occasion helps cut a hook out of an entanglement of kelp. When fishing is done on the surface no sinker is used; but for deep fishing, of course, a sinker is necessary.

Big bass generally prefer live bait; anchovies and sardines, in that order. Bottom fishing, which generally gets smaller fish, is very productive with strip-cut bait, shrimp, or rock crabs.

Kelp bass are found in southern California as far north as the Point of Conception. They do not migrate, but during the colder weather they will move into deep holes, making it difficult for anglers to hook into them. The season for bass extends from April until November and the best fishing is in the spring and fall.

California rock fishermen can get the bass wherever kelp beds are close enough to shore to be reached by a hearty cast. With good surf spinning equipment, the lines are cast into a hole in the kelp, allowing the line to sink. Once on the bottom, it is retrieved a short distance and then relaxed. This action is repeated all the way in.

Kelp and sand bass are generally found together, but are often mistakenly identified. The dorsal fin helps to tell them apart: the third to fifth dorsal spines of the kelp bass are almost the same size, whereas in the sand bass they are smaller. Rockfish are also often mistaken for kelp bass.

San Diego and the Tia Juana kelp beds, Catalina Island, and the Horseshoe kelp beds outside Long Beach are all popular fishing spots for kelp bass.

As much as I dislike government interference, I certainly feel it is warranted in the interests of fish conservation; the fish are beginning to show signs of making a comeback in some areas. It would be fine for other species in many other areas, for it would put an end to much waste.

### Bass (Sea), Black

Black sea bass are the monsters of California coastal fishing. When one is hooked, the angler feels he has hooked bottom until suddenly the fish begins to roll and then 150 to 500 pounds of stubborn fish has to be fought to the surface.

The record fish was a 483-pounder caught off the Coronado Islands. These huge black sea bass are members of the grouper family that sit on the bottom in the kelp beds waiting for meals to come to them. However, occasionally when a live-bait boat is freely throwing out dinners some of the big ones will lumber out of their holes and gulp an unsuspecting angler's bait.

There is nothing quite like hooking into a 300-pound fish when 20-pounders may be the epitome of the angler's dream. The only thing the angler can do is hope everything works in his favor, and then maybe he has one chance in twenty of getting the fish to gaff. I have known captains to drop everything to help land one of these prizes.

If an angler is hardy and would like to take a crack at some of the wildest sport-tackle angling in the world, he should get a small boat and head out after black sea bass along the California coast, from Ventura to Newport Beach or off the coast of Anacapa Island or the Coronado Islands. Two men usually fish, and as soon as one gets a hit the other immediately comes to the aid of the lucky angler, who takes a position in the bow of the boat. The second man stands ready to move the boat in the direction the fish decides to pull.

On sport tackle the only chance the angler has is to play his fish perfectly. From the moment a fish is hooked the angler should begin to pump and continue pumping the line throughout the whole fight. This is done to keep the fish's mouth open, which eventually tires the fish. Slack line must at all times be avoided in a fight of this sort, for if the fish gets any headway and hits the slack line with all his 300 pounds you will hear the most discouraging snap that ever came to your ears.

Sport-tackle fishing for these specimens calls for hollow-glass rods, a star drag reel capable of holding 400 to 600 yards of 30-pound monofilament test line. Hooks used are 2/0 to 4/0, to which a squid, bonito, or mackerel is attached as bait.

Fishing begins as the angler takes position near the kelp beds and lets the bait drift into them, and from then on plenty of luck is needed.

For heavy tackle work against the big fellows, hooks are size

10/0 to 14/0 and they are attached to the line by 7-strand 1/32-inch cable leader. Line should be 500 yards long and size 6/0 to 9/0. Rods may vary, with tips weighing 16 to 22 ounces.

Occasionally, sea bass are taken by hand lines by rock fishermen at such places as Point Banda, California, or by one of the pier fishermen in Lower California. These anglers are in for a tough afternoon's work, but if successful they will have a prize that will fill up their freezers for many months.

### Bass (Sea), White

Southern California rates its hard-fighting white sea bass as one of the top game fish of the country. When hooked, this member of the croaker family (and close relative of the weakfish) specializes in diving into the kelp beds where he uses his bulk and all his cunning to play havoc with tackle.

Fish averaging 15 to 20 pounds, and sometimes 60 pounds, are regularly taken. The record catch weighed 83 pounds and was brought to gaff off Mexico. Thirty-pounders add every ounce of weight to their fury, and are hard to forget if you ever hook one.

The fish range from Alaska southward to the tropical waters of Central America but they are considered a sports fish only in the southern reaches of California as far north as Point of Conception. Above this point they become rather scarce. In southern California they may be taken all year, but best fishing is from June to September.

The white sea bass are voracious feeders. An early-morning angler can get them as close as forty feet from shore. You bait a sardine on a hook, throw out a line, and let it stay there waiting for the fish to come for his breakfast. Most white sea bass are taken from piers and docks during the early hours when they cruise freely.

Inshore, the fish are generally smaller than offshore, but at harbor entrances very large sea bass can often be picked up early in the morning. Here they may be attacking a school of anchovies and the water will be boiling with fish. Generally, when the fish are on top, a sardine-baited hook is fished without a sinker. How-

ever, if it becomes obvious they are after other types of bait fish, change when possible.

The biggest catches of white sea bass occur in the kelp beds where the fish prey upon anchovies, sardines, crabs, shrimp and squid. Here they are fished from live bait boats which try to locate schools, and throw live bait overboard as chum to tempt the fish closer. If the fish cannot be located live bait is thrown into the kelp beds, and any fish that are about will come to investigate the proffered meal. Ground-up fish also can be successfully used as chum.

Sea bass are taken off the bottom with either live or dead bait. Among baits that are fairly sure to hook fish are sardines, anchovies, queenfish, shrimp, or even strip-cut bait. The fish are not difficult to get on the hook; if they are hungry they will eagerly hit the offering. It is after they are hooked that they become a headache. Their first action is a hard run and dive. They twist and gyrate, looking for an available object for leverage to tear the hook from their soft mouths. The angler has to be extremely careful and patient with them at all times and must play them slowly and surely, never forcing the fish. A running fish must be given line freely and should be braked only with a thumb and rod tip. If the star drag is used, it must be set lightly and the pole must then be springy enough to absorb sudden spurts and dives. Another important point is to take time in landing the fish, for haste can lead to forcing the fish.

When the white sea bass is finally in at the boat, the angler runs into a series of unexpected problems, for these fish habitually take sudden dives and desperate measures. Often they dive under a boat in an effort to get away from the impending gaff, which implement is the only means of bringing twenty pounds of struggling fish on board.

Other standard methods of fishing will be successful, too, but trolling for them is popular. The boat is maneuvered slowly, and strip-cut bait is weighted down so as to run several feet beneath the surface. Trolling devices include various chrome lures and weighted feathers, and mornings are favored, when the fish are

on top, rather than later in the day when they swim on the bottom. Jigging is another good method for catching bass.

Tackle generally are 6/9 outfits with 3/0 or 4/0 reels holding 200 or 300 hundred yards of at least 15-pound test line. Spinning equipment is usually medium size with line of the same test. If big fish are expected, line may be 25-pound test. Standard bottom rigs with hooks measuring 1/0 are the rule. Until only recently much larger-sized hooks were used, until it was found that the smaller hooks catch more fish on the first strike. They hold the fish just as securely, since the fish hook lightly, owing to their soft mouths.

Important in taking white sea bass is learning how to strike the fish. Sometimes the fish does not hit the bait, but takes it and runs off with it, hardly holding it in his mouth. Give him plenty of time—at least fifteen seconds to a half a minute—before striking. Striking is done by raising the rod tip slightly, so as not to rip the mouth of the fish.

If you find them biting the tails off the sardine baits, use two hooks, setting them as you would in mooching.

In San Diego, which is the white sea bass capital of the country, and all the way north to Santa Monica, these fish rate high both as a sports fish and a table fish.

## Cabezon

If anglers ever held a beauty contest of ocean fish, the cabezon would probably be hustled out of the door before the contest started. He is an ugly fish, from an ugly-looking family—the sculpins.

The cabezon has a huge head, with thick bluish lips that cover a mouthful of sharp teeth. It has large eyes with a pair of fleshy flaps over them, a strong spine on the tip of its snout, and a large spiny pectoral and dorsal fin; no scales, but the skin has a wrinkled appearance which doesn't help to make him a thing of beauty.

Just the same many consider cabezon to be the best eating fish of the coast and anglers regard him as a prize. The flesh often has a bluish color which fades into white meat as it is cooked. The

only word of caution is that the roe of cabezon is inedible, being poisonous.

Cabezón is found along the entire length of the coast. Rock-fishermen often hit into them, and, surprisingly, even the largest—20- to 25-pounders—hardly can be felt taking the bait. When one is hooked he puts up a tough scrap but seldom escapes because his mouth is tough and holds the hook (No. 1) firmly.

Rock crabs are their favorite food and it follows these crabs make the best baits. Others are shrimp, sand worms, and strip-cut fish. The best time for fishing is during an incoming tide and during the night, when big ones come in close to feed.

Cabezón are found near shore and offshore over rocky bottoms. Smaller members can be taken in tide pools and at the mouths of streams and rivers, all year long. When an angler gets one from a rocky hole he should immediately return his line to the same spot, because several other cabezón may be there, eager and ravenous. They are also taken from the bottom, near kelp beds.

The cabezón is the biggest and most important member of the sculpin family. The red Irish Lord, or Irishlord, is abundant on the shores of northern Oregon and Washington but it seldom grows larger than 20 inches. The prickly sculpin and staghorn sculpin round out the portion of the family that hold any interest for anglers, but these two are seldom going over a foot long.

## Corbina

The California corbina is the member of the Pacific Coast croaker family which once was the top sports fish of southern California. This fish was so highly thought of that it was protected by game laws as far back as 1909, and it is now illegal to net or sell them. Still the drain on them continues and corbina are becoming scarcer every year. Catches are leaner now than ten years ago.

For the patient angler this fine sports fish is still available from almost any sandy beach from the Point of Conception south. Beaches are the best places to take them, but rock and pier fishermen will also hook into them. They can be an infuriating fish,

especially when a whole school plays around your line completely ignoring the offering.

The rule to follow in fishing corbina is to use light tackle and small hooks. The hook should be completely covered with the bait, with only the tiniest bit protruding. Monofilament leader is a must, but only short pieces are used to attach the hooks to the line. Sinkers are the pyramid type, heavy enough to hold bottom but not going over six ounces. Fishermen preferring a single hook set-up do well to use the fish-finder rig.

Baits for corbina may be pile or rock worms, crabs, mussels, clams, or crabs. If you decide to chum a hot spot with mussels, follow up with mussels, once the area is activated. Sand crabs bring steady results for the day-to-day fisherman. If an angler has fished one spot awhile and no action develops, he should move elsewhere. A catch generally means a small school is somewhere about.

Corbina are bottom fish and spend much of their time searching the sandy bottom near shore for bits of food. Like the bonefish and other nervous fish, they should be fished with an almost motionless bait. The bait should be cast out and then allowed to sit for a minute or two, then it may be pulled in a few feet and given another quiet interval. If the fish are in a taking mood they will find it. At night the fish seem less shy and are found near shore in larger numbers, making night fishing best.

When corbina are hooked they are generally hooked solidly and liberties can be taken. They have tough mouths which hold the hook in place during a hard fight. Precautions are necessary after the fish has spent itself and is being led into the beach; many fish are lost as a result of carelessness. Never try to horse the fish the last ten feet to the beach. Wait for a wave to help lift the fish in, for this will add catches instead of failures. Even the angler who never keeps a fish doesn't like to miss one, for that is an indication the fish beat him; whereas if you catch one and release it, that's true sportsmanship on the part of the victor.

The corbina has a long slender body and is sooty gray to steel blue in color. It is recognized by a small barbel on the tip of its lower jaw. Big ones weigh 4 to 6 pounds and may attain an over-all

length of 2½ feet. The biggest specimens are taken around lower California, Mexico.

These fish, excellent sports fish, unfortunately are decreasing in number, so keep conservation in mind. Take only the fish you want and under no circumstances more than the law allows—ten.

### Croakers (California)

The croaker family of the Pacific Coast not only includes white sea bass and cabezon but also two of the finest scrappers found anywhere, the spotfin croaker (*Roncador stearnsi*) and the yellow-fin croaker (*Umbrina roncadore*). Three other croakers complete the Pacific coast family, but they are not considered sports fish for various reasons. The black croaker (*Sciaena saturna*) is too scarce, while the white croaker (*Genyonemus lineatus*) and queenfish (*Seriphus politus*) are considered panfish rather than sports fish.

During their season, which begins in the spring and extends though the summer, croakers are hunted by an army of surf casters. During July and August the fishing reaches its peak—and catches are plentiful.

The Spotfin croaker, identified by the large black spot on the base of pectoral fins, is sometimes called the golden croaker because some specimens are a golden or brassy color. This fish may grow to 10 pounds, the record fish being 9½ pounds and just over 26 inches in length. This croaker ranges south from Point Conception, California, into Mexico.

The spotfin comes in close to shore but has a preference for deeper water and searches out holes along the shore. Anglers hunt for these croaker holes and cast their lines to them. If a bait suddenly plunges into a crevice as it is being reeled in, it should be left there for several minutes, because in all probability a croaker hole has been located.

The yellowfin croaker is the smaller of the two species but is just as popular with anglers. Some beach fishermen regard the yellowfin as being the better surf fish because it comes into shallow water more readily. This fish attains a maximum size of 5 pounds



and a length of 15 or 16 inches, but the average catch will weigh 2 or 3 pounds. Yellowfin are taken any time during the day or night; however, night fishing gets better results. They range from Point Conception to Mexico, where they may be taken along almost any sandy beach, bay, or in the sloughs.

Pier fishermen get excellent sport out of croakers, and they take both spotfin and yellowfin regularly. Still, queenfish and white croaker, or tomcod as they are often called, give them the steadiest sport. The way to catch these fish from a pier is to get the line to the bottom and keep it moving until something strikes.

Breakwaters are excellent places for yellowfin. Locate a spot on the breakwater, among kelp, and fish alongside. A pile worm or sand worm kept moving in this water can be counted on to bring a rash of strikes.

Small-boat and barge fishing where the fisherman drops his lines to the bottom is a sure way to get spotfins.

Baits vary with the preference of fishermen but anchovies and other live baits are the best bet for big spotfins. Baits for the yellowfin and smaller spotfin may be sand worms, pile worms, clams, mussels, or sand crabs.

Spotfin hit the line energetically and usually manage to hook themselves without the angler's striking the line. Once hooked, he may run sideways, but more often he will charge the beach like a runaway halfback on a line plunge. Anglers are often caught flat-footed by this strange maneuver, and the fish often gets enough slack line to free himself and all his cousins too. The right way to play this maneuver is to run up the beach the moment you see the fish is getting ahead of your reeling. This way the slack is cut to a minimum and the fish has no chance to rip the hook free.

Equipment for croaker varies but usually is light or medium. Medium spinning rods with plenty of whippy action are popular. The reel should be capable of holding 200 yards of 12- or 20-pound monofilament line. Hooks of size No. 1 or 1/0 are tied to the line by short pieces of monofilament leader. The sinker should just be heavy enough to hold the bottom loosely, as it doesn't hurt to let the bait drift.

The spotfin and yellowfin croakers have long been recognized

as sports fish; in fact, they have been protected by game laws since 1909.

### Flounder (Starry)

The starry flounder is only one of over twenty different species of flatfish found on the Pacific Coast. It is easily identified by the alternating orange and black stripes on his fins. Starry flounder grow to doormats up to 3 feet in length and 20 pounds in weight. They range all the way from southern California up to Alaska and across to Asia. Other species of flounder are taken all along our Pacific Coast, offering excellent inshore sports fishing.

Flounder are for the most part caught in the inshore waters along the coast. Every bay and area with inshore brackish backwater has its enthusiasts who go for these fish regularly. The mouths of freshwater rivers produce large catches that are taken by shore fishermen along the coasts, pier fishermen, by rowboat enthusiasts, and by breakwater fishermen. From a breakwater, fishing is generally best on the seaward side of the rocks.

Flounder take the general run of bottom baits, with clams and worms favored. Other excellent baits include shrimp, mollusks, and almost any small fish. Strip-cut bait is a sure producer of fish when it is worked slowly along the bottom in a smooth, easy rhythm. Baits should be put on hooks measuring from No. 4 to 1/0, with the 1/0 size best for starry flounder.

Equipment should be light, so that maximum sport can be obtained from these scrappy bottom fish. A standard bottom rig or a spreader-type rig, with line of 5-pound test is all that is necessary because the average fish weigh 3 to 5 pounds. Spinning rods, light bay rods, or even fly rods may be used depending upon the weight of sinker.

For best results in flounder fishing, it is good to drift until a hole is located, anchor there and fish it dry. In such a spot, the angler is likely to cover the bottom of the boat with doormats in short order. Another sure way is to pick a likely spot and drift continually over it, picking up a few fish with each drift. Pier men pick up the fish as they swim in with a tide.

Flounder are always popular. They are available all year in accessible water and only the minimum of equipment is needed. They are always hungry, easy to catch, and excellent on the table, so it's no wonder flatfish are the nation's number one inshore sports fish.

## Greenling

Greenling range from Alaska down to Los Angeles, California, and are abundant above Point Conception. The three species of greenling include kelp greenling (*Hexagrammos decagrammus*) which is also known as sea trout or rock trout, whitespotted greenling (*Hexagrammos Stelleri*) or tommy cod and rock greenling (*Hexagrammos superciliosus*) sometimes called red rock.

The female of the kelp greenling is covered with trout spots, which have given them their name of sea trout, and male has large lines and two pairs of flaps above the eyes. The sea trout name is commonly used in California, while in Oregon and Washington they are commonly referred to as greenling.

The whitespot greenling, extremely plentiful in Puget Sound and other spots along the Washington coast, is distinguished by many white spots over its body. The red rock trout is known for the black spot above its pectoral fins.

All three species grow to a maximum size of approximately 2 feet in length. They are fished according to the usual rockfishing method, but two notable variations are necessary. The first and more important is that hooks should be smaller than those used for ordinary rockfish. Sizes should vary between No. 2 and No. 4 hooks, depending on the size of fish and the angler's preference. The other variation is that baits should be continually lifted off the bottom 5 to 10 feet and then allowed to drop again. The fish take the bait on the slow rise.

Baits for greenling can be strip-cut fish, shrimp, sea worms, or crustaceans. Generally the fish are not fussy at what they nip at and will hit anything presented.

The three species of greenling make up a group that constitutes the most abundant fish along the Oregon and Washington coast.

They are popular with anglers because they are sporty to catch and can be taken all year round, from shore or kelp bed or over rocks offshore. They are good eating and it is not difficult to take home a basketful of them.

### Grunion

From June 1 and extending to March 31 of the following year, the small 4- to 7-inch grunion can be picked up off the beach in California south of Point Conception. These little fish come right onto land during the extremely high tide that occurs during the full, or dark of the moon cycle.

Grunion come onto land in one wave, riding it as far as it goes and staying there as it recedes. The female then quickly lays eggs, which are fertilized by the accompanying male. This happens so quickly that on the next big wave that comes up to them they are ready to head to sea again.

Sportsmen have found fishing for them a pleasant way to spend an evening. Equipment consists only of a flashlight, because hooks and lines are useless and it is illegal to net them. All along these shores during the height of the season, from July to August, when conditions are right, people can be seen standing in the water and facing shore. As a wave passes, they turn on their flashlights and quickly gather up as many of the little fish as they can before the next wave takes them out again. Grunion are good eating, lots of fun to gather up, and every member of the family can partake in the sport.

### Halibut

The Atlantic species of flatfish, the halibut, occasionally weigh up to 700 pounds, whereas the Pacific halibut may attain a maximum weight of 500 pounds and an awesome 9 feet in length.

The Atlantic halibut is not considered a sports fish because it is rarely available in waters where it can be caught on rod and reel. The Pacific members of the halibut family are more readily available to fishermen and therefore rank high as sports fish.

There are three species of flatfish called halibut on the Pacific Coast. The largest is the Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) which ranges from the Aleutian Islands down to San Francisco. The female of this species is the 500-pound giant, while most males stop growing at a much smaller size. The arrowtoothed halibut (*Atheresthes stomias*) is found in the same range as the Pacific halibut but occasionally is taken as far south as Point Conception, California. The best halibut fishing is from Coos Bay, Oregon, north. The arrowtooth is often found together with the Pacific halibut and in many cases is wrongly identified as the latter. The maximum length an arrowtooth attains is 30 inches.

The third type of Pacific halibut is the California halibut (*Paralichthys maculosus*) whose vicious-looking mouth easily identifies him. This fish attains the weight of 75 pounds and a length of 40 inches. They range from tropical water north to Point Conception, California, but the best fishing for them is from San Diego Bay, south.

Fishing methods for the various halibuts are similar because all are bottom fish. Of the three, the California halibut is the most frequent to be taken in inshore waters and from piers and small boats. Occasionally the big halibut will chase a school of anchovies right to the beach and then surf men will get a crack at them, but this is not too common and should merely be considered good luck to the angler who happens to be there. Halibut taken inshore are usually much smaller than those offshore; but for the real monsters, fishing has to be done in water 80 fathoms or more deep.

There is an art to hooking a halibut, for he is a fish that in spite of his size takes a bait gingerly. He picks up a bait, sets it in his teeth, and starts to run with it. He must be given line and allowed time to take the bait. When he is finally struck, it is done by raising the rod tip slowly and surely so that the hook sinks deeply into his soft mouth. Sometimes this fish puts up almost no fight at all and is led in like a docile sheep. At other times he takes hard short runs along the bottom. The fish must never be given slack line; his strength and weight make it easy to rip the hook from his mouth. In a boat, never lift the halibut's head out of the water as you bring him in, for this scares the fish and he runs madly

against the side of the boat or wildly dives for the bottom, often throwing the hook. A fish should be gaffed or netted, and while the angler is waiting for the opportune moment to bring him to gaff, keep leading the fish around the boat to avoid frightening him.

The California halibut can be taken from March until October, and during warm weather they frequent the kelp beds. A popular fishing method is to drift over their known territory and let lines drift along the bottom to entice them. They take anchovies, sardines, squid, and other bait fish. A herring strip lures the Pacific halibut, and bait walking helps to induce them to take the bait.

Rigs for the big northern halibut consist of sinkers up to two pounds when necessary and hooks measuring 6/0 to 10/0. They are fished from a three-way swivel with 50-pound test wire leader. Reels are 9/0 holding at least 60-pound test line, while the rods are the heavy-duty type with a 16-ounce rod tip.

California halibut are caught with a 1/0 hook and 20-pound test monofilament line attached to a medium or heavy-duty rod. These fish can also be taken by working a silver spoon slowly along the bottom. Inshore fish are caught with the same light tackle as other Pacific Coast flatfish.

The halibut is one of the table delights of the Pacific Coast. A 50-pounder would mean enough fillets in the freezer for a year.

### Ling Cod

The ling cod is found over the entire length of the U.S. Pacific Coast and is regularly taken by rockfishermen working from shore or in a boat. The greatest number of ling cod are taken from April until October; however, the inshore fisherman's best chance to get them is from the first of the year until about April while they are in close to spawn.

From Eureka north, including Oregon and Washington, the ling cod are taken near shore, while along most of the California coast they are an offshore fish. Puget Sound gives up some giant specimens, as big as 70 pounds and over 4 feet long. When they are in close they can often be taken by any shiny piece of metal or

jig, by moving it up and down in the water in front of them. Rock crabs, shrimp, and strip-cut bait will do if available. Bait should be kept moving in a walking fashion for best results.

The ling cod is a big bottom fish that resembles the cod in behavior. Offshore, he often frequents the kelp beds and rocky reefs where he is taken by rockfishing methods (See Rockfish). The proper hooks for ling cods are No. 4/0 to 6/0. They are identified by the very long dorsal fin that runs practically the length of the body and the large canine-like teeth with fleshy flaps over the eyes. The color varies a great deal from bluish gray to orange. The flesh is excellent eating.

### Mackerel (Pacific)

Pacific mackerel range the entire length of our Western coast where they give the light-tackle angler plenty of action. Like other members of the mackerel family, these travel in schools, and when an angler hits into a school he is in a maelstrom of activity.

The average weight of a Pacific mackerel is about a pound and consequently should only be taken with light equipment. When the fish are in the bays, they cause great excitement and anglers get many of them. At other times, they must be searched out in offshore waters as they move up and down the coast. Live-bait boats sometimes keep schools about by throwing anchovies out to them. These mackerel are drawn to shore to spawn in the California area, around Santa Barbara and San Diego. The fish are prolific and begin to reproduce at two years of age when they reach approximately 12 inches in length. Pacific mackerel sometimes grow to 6 pounds.

The best mackerel fishing on the coast takes place in the fall during the southern migrations, and the best locations are from San Francisco south to San Diego. They are taken by trolling, casting, or still fishing throughout this area. Baits include bait fish, cut strips of fish, worms, clams, or shrimp. This fish can also be taken by flies, and the fisherman who hooks a 2-pounder on a fly rod will have his hands full for upward to a half hour. Trolling jigs and spoons also catch them.

## Perch (Surf)

Fishermen have two basic classifications for the nineteen different kinds of Pacific perch: surf perch and sea perch. Surf perch are the smaller species found all along the coast, while the sea perch are those taken farther offshore.

The whole shoreline of the Pacific is the playground of some species of surf perch. Fishermen can venture on all the beaches in their quest, hitting into the daring little fish that take a bait anywhere in shallow waters. Schools of them offer plenty of action as they rip into the bait. Several different species of perch often mingle within a school. Smaller sea perch live close to shore until mature enough to head for open water, and thus are taken in large numbers.

Calm days and mirror-smooth waters make these fighters shy and reluctant to leave their rocky hiding places. The best days are when a wind has whipped a topping on the water. This seems to make them fearless as they dart around frantically for food.

Rigs for perch consist of light surf rods with a maximum of 12-pound test line, while offshore any standard light or medium rod is capable of taking them. Sinkers should be tied at the end of the line and two hooks attached above the sinker. Hooks should be small with No. 4 or 6 considered best because they catch the small bait steelers as well as the big ones.

Perch go for mussels, clams, sand crabs, or shrimp. When fishing with mussels, it is necessary to inspect the bait regularly, because it melts away easily. Strip-cut bait one or two inches long is effective onshore as well as offshore.

The perch family are all live bearers, varying in size from 3-inch pests to 18-inchers which approach 10 pounds. Three- to 5-pounders are considered large.

A favorite surf perch of southern California is the barred surf perch, which is caught from rocks, beaches, piers, and jetties throughout the area, and is now being protected from commercial fishing by game laws. The opaleye, sometimes called the black perch, is also popular in these waters. North, the redtail surf perch is the fish that populates this shoreline.



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All perch have a fine flaky white meat that is excellent eating. They are a popular game fish, especially in the winter when they offer good sport after other fish have moved off.

### *A List of Perch*

#### *Surf perch*

- Barred surf perch
- Calico surf perch
- Redtail surf perch
- Silver surf perch
- Spotfin surf perch
- Walleye surf perch

#### *Sea perch*

- Pink sea perch
- Rainbow sea perch
- Sharpnose sea perch
- Striped sea perch
- White sea perch

#### *Other perches*

- Black perch (opaleye)
- Dwarf perch
- Island perch
- Kelp perch
- Pile perch
- Reef perch
- Ruberslip perch
- Shiner perch

## Rockfish

There are nearly sixty species of Pacific Coast rockfish known along the entire length of the coast. They are found wherever rocky bottoms occur. Some are taken from shore, from shallow bottoms, and in deep water offshore. Rockfish are live bearers and are identified by the spine. They vary in size from the 3-foot tambor

to tiny copher. Rockfish are bait stealers that do nothing more than annoy anglers.

In southern California these are the prime species:

Chilipepper, bocaccio, speckled rockfish, green spotted rockfish, and kelp rockfish; while north of Point Conception we find black-and-yellow rockfish, flag rockfish, and black rockfish.

Along the rocky shores of the Oregon coast there are sculpins, fingerhead greenling in the shallow waters that are different fish but are taken by rockfishing methods. The black rockfish, one of the few of the rockfish family that take trolled lures, inhabits these waters. Offshore in the deeper water the big vermillion, tambor rockfish and orange rockfish wait. Hot spots for rockfish include Coos Bay, Depoe, and Yaquina.

The state of Washington boasts a rugged coast where rockfish are so thick that many scorn them and do not consider them sport. Much of the reason for overlooking this excellent fishing stems from the fact that throughout the Northwest salmon fishing is so predominant that all other fishing has become unimportant, which is too bad, because fine sport is being overlooked. The bottom waters of the coast and Puget Sound are thick with these excellent bottom fish that include strawberry rockfish, china rockfish, barred rockfish—just to mention a few. Ling cod, sculpins, greenlings, halibut, and flounder are there too, and the bottom contains enough fish to excite any angler.

Rockfish were once called rock cod, but the term is discouraged now because they are no way related to cod. The name rockfish is more appropriate, being found among rocks. They may be in as little as six inches of water or in water over 100 fathoms deep.

Rockfish that stay close to shore are naturally the most important to fishermen, and it is the effort involved in getting them that the sport, rockfishing, was named for. Rockfishing has so many aspects that at times you wonder if the fishing is in pursuit of the same fish.

One method of catching rockfish is by jacking them up out of the water. This doesn't sound radical, but if you add the fact that the line is only 6 inches to a foot long, it makes a strange picture. It is done by the angler moving around the rocks and dropping

the pole where the fish are hiding. The hook is baited with a mussel, and if a fish is there it will lose no time in striking the bait. When he bites, the angler lifts up the prize and he has one of the few fish in this world that has to fight a pole.

Another odd method of rockfishing is deep-hole fishing. Here one practically goes deep-sea fishing right at the shore. The Pacific shoreline has many spots where the water at the shore drops straight down 100 feet or more, and sportsmen fish these deep holes from the shore, knowing that the bottom may hold some of the biggest rockfish anywhere.

For this kind of fishing the angler uses round sinkers to minimize the chances of catching the steep ledges on the way up. Hooks must be squeezed with a pliers to turn the points inward so as to avoid snags. Wire leader must be used to hold the hooks that vary from size 4/0 to 6/0. Tackle is sturdy heavy-duty stuff capable of taking a hard beating.

When a fish is hooked in a deep hole it becomes a real job to bring him up. The fish dive continually into ledges where they tangle up and rip line; therefore, it is up to the angler to bring them up swiftly and certainly, not allowing the fish time to cause trouble. Rockfish, greenling, cabezon, and ling cod of trophy size come out of these holes.

The normal or standard rockfishing is done by choosing a spot along the steep ledges of the coast and then climbing out along the ledges. The angler brings with him a supply of extra rigs; invariably some get lost each day, in this rugged type of fishing. Rockfishermen consider losing rigs part of the sport.

The day starts with the angler looking for a spot where the fish are feeding. He moves around, throwing his line out to likely places. On many occasions, it is not important to cast a great distance; the best fishing is practically right on the wall.

During a high tide when the water rushes up to rock side, the fisherman sometimes works pier style, because he fishes straight down out of the rocks. At low tide a cast is required to get out to the pools at the sides of the rocks.

Early in the day, the angler baits up with at least two different kinds of bait, which may be strip-cut fish, shrimp, squid, clams,

crabs, worms, or small bait fish. Shrimp and squid are the rockfisherman's favorites. A trick to try in this or any other kind of bait fishing is to tie a luminous lure or spinner several feet above the baits. This attracts the fish to the line, and even if they won't hit the lure they will come close enough to get a good look at the bait.

The angler who finds himself near some rocks with hooks and gear but without bait need never worry; there are always mussels to be had. Another device in areas where the fish are thick, as in Puget Sound, is to put a piece of tinfoil on the end of the hook and jig it up and down. This method can usually snag a small one, which then is cut up for the day's bait. A colored piece of cloth on the hook can also start activity. In many places the water is so clear that the angler can see the rockfish darting about.

Rigs consist of No. 1 or 2 hooks attached to the line by 6-inch leaders. Twenty-pound test monofilament line gives the angler a margin of safety among the sharp rocks that fray line like sandpaper. It is essential to cut off at least 5 feet of line every time fishing is over for the day, because no line can stand the workout required of this sort of fishing. The line nearest the hook is what takes the beating and it is usually here that breaks occur, so as a precaution it should be inspected regularly. Rods may be sturdy bay or surf rods.

Two to six hooks are used, but I have found two hooks adequate and plenty of fish can be taken on them. The fewer the hooks, the less chance of snagging. Sinkers are necessary for casting and also to hold bottom, for these fish live on the bottom all their lives.

Wind is the rockfisherman's worst enemy. It not only spoils the fishing but can make life dangerous for anyone who may be climbing around the rocks. Keep away from the rocks on windy days. Many experts won't fish on windy days simply because the fish will not bite then.

When a fish is hooked it should be pulled in like a mischievous child and allowed no time to get in trouble. The only time an angler should pause in bringing in a fish is when it has to be hauled over an outcropped rock; then it pays to wait for a wave so that the fish can be brought over in buoyant water and not be dragged as dead weight, which rips the hook from their delicate mouths.

Taking a fish in, the angler often learns the way of life on the rocky coast. Often a larger fish suddenly appears behind his hooked brother, mouth wide open ready to devour the helpless one in a cannibalistic gulp. It is not uncommon to hook big rockfish by having small ones on the line. These fish are looking for a meal and they don't care if it is a cousin, brother, or sister they swallow.

Small-boat fishing for rockfish is a delightful pastime. During low tide when the fish move from shore a short way out the boatman can pick them off the bottom. Generally, the angler tries to drop anchor a short distance from the rocks and then allows a slack anchor line to permit him to drift to the rocks. The state of Washington and specifically the area around Puget Sound has the largest per capita boat ownership in the world, and even these salmon-crazy natives are now learning the pleasure of this sport. One admitted to me recently, "Those fish have sure got some good meat on them."

The small-boat man who works close to shore will follow the tide out and fish over submerged rocks that bear food for this family of fish. If the angler happens to get over soft bottoms he can forget about rockfish—they just won't be there. Move the bait up and down in an exaggerated walking method—as high as 10 feet from the bottom before dropping it again. The latter part of the ride up should be done in a swift motion while the first of the rise is gentle and slow. Hooks near shore are No. 2 to 1/0, while 3/0 to 5/0 hooks are used if the fishing is any distance from shore. Wire leader is suggested for deeper fishing.

Rockfishing is divided into three categories: fishing in shallow to 50 feet of water; in 50 to 200 feet, called moderately deep-water fishing; and deep-water fishing over 200 feet down. All three categories have their adherents. The shore and rowboat boys prefer shallow fishing; the private boatowners specialize in moderately deep water fishing; while the big bottom boats go out to the very deep water.

The Pacific Coast has a narrow shelf where the level drops off suddenly to very deep water, and along this shelf are steep ledges and canyons. The warm Japanese current brings plankton for small marine life, which prosper and become food for the giants of

the deep. The big fish sit on the bottom of these shelves, tempting fishermen into developing methods of catching them.

The boats which specialize in deep-sea fishing are all equipped with fish-finders to help locate the prey over these erratic bottoms. Deep-water fishing starts at a depth of 200 feet and at times an angler may have as much as 600 feet of line out on the bottom.

Equipment must be among the most rugged manufactured. To take the strain, rods should be stiff and heavy, measuring 6 feet or under in over-all length. Reels are equipped with star drags, size 6/0 to 8/0, and must be capable of holding 350 to 500 yards of 50-pound test dacron or linen line. Wire line is sometimes used because at great depths the wire so easily telegraphs a nibble. Heavy hand lines are used by many anglers.

Sinkers vary from 1 to 3 pounds or more, according to the depth and current. Hooks are 4/0 to 8/0 and are attached to the line by short strips of nylon leader. The sinker is on the bottom and four to eight hooks are tied to the line at regular distances from the bottom. Strip-cut fish and squid are usual baits.

The line is lowered over the side and goes to the bottom at angles, depending upon the weight of the sinkers and the buoyancy of the lines. Wire lines tend to go straight down.

Strikes in deep water are hit hard because the fishing is rough. Often when a fish is hooked it is not reeled in unless the fisherman feels he has something of special size. Generally an angler waits until he feels there are several fish on the line before he begins the hard work of bringing the heavy line up out of several hundred feet of water.

Some fish will struggle frantically on the bottom; then, when they get about halfway up, they suddenly die and float to the surface. When the angler gets them aboard they are truly a strange sight, with bulged eyes and stomachs protruding. They cannot stand the change in pressure as they come up into areas of less pressure. They literally explode in much the same way a diver would explode coming too rapidly out of the deep. Other fish are built to take sudden pressure changes and the rise has no effect on their fight or health.

Deep-water fishing reveals some monstrous fish: 40-pound ling

Name	Scientific Name	Found in shallow, medium, or deep water	Range	Hooks	Maximum size (inches)	Comments
Barred Rockfish	<i>Sebastes nigrolineatus</i>	Deep	N. Calif. to Washington	6/0	24	Has vertical bands of color—a common deep water fish.
Bass Rockfish	<i>Sebastes serranoides</i>	Medium	S. Calif.*	1/0	18	Near kelp beds—bait shrimp.
Black Rockfish	<i>Sebastes melanoides</i>	Shallow	N. Calif. Oregon & Wash.	2/0	20	May be taken trolling a lure slowly—important sports fish.
Black-and-Yellow Rockfish	<i>Sebastes chrysomelas</i>	Shallow	Calif.	No. 2	15	A central Calif. fish of high rating.
Blue Rockfish	<i>Sebastes mystinus</i>	Medium	Entire coast	3/0	20	Abundant in Oregon & Wash.
Bocaccio	<i>Sebastes paucispinis</i>	Deep	All	6/0	35	Abundant in southern Calif.—approaches 20 lbs.
Bolita	<i>Sebastes auriculatus</i>	Shallow	Entire coast	No. 2	18	Found in brookfish waters in southern Calif.
Chilipepper	<i>Sebastes goodei</i>	Deep	Calif.	6/0	22	One of the most important rockfish of southern Calif.
China Rockfish	<i>Sebastes nebulosus</i>	Shallow to moderate	N. Calif., Oregon, & Wash.	2/0	16	Common in Oregon and Wash.
Flag Rockfish	<i>Sebastes rubrivinctus</i>	Deep	Entire coast	6/0	20	Common in Calif.
Gopher Rockfish	<i>Sebastes carnatus</i>	Shallow	Calif.	No. 2	10	A common small rockfish.
Greenspotted Rockfish	<i>Sebastes chlorostictus</i>	Moderate to deep	Calif.	4/0	18	A southern Calif. fish—has pink flesh.
Kelp Rockfish	<i>Sebastes atrovirens</i>	Shallow	S. Calif.	No. 2	15	Found in kelp beds and shallow waters.
Longjaw Rockfish	<i>Sebastes alutus</i>	Deep	Oregon to Wash.	6/0	18	Has dark lining of mouth.
Orange Rockfish	<i>Sebastes pinniger</i>	Medium	Calif., Oregon, & Wash.	3/0	30	Young fish near shore, a Chinese red and black. An important gourmet species.
Quillback Rockfish	<i>Sebastes maliger</i>	Shallow & moderate	N. Calif., Oregon, & Wash.	1/0	24	Abundant in Wash.
Strawberry Rockfish	<i>Sebastes elongatus</i>	Deep	Entire coast	6/0	12	Abundant in southern Calif. Named after its pink and red color. Has elongated stripes.
Tambor Rockfish Treefish	<i>Sebastes roborinus</i> <i>Sebastes serripes</i>	Moderate Shallow	Entire coast S. Calif.	4/0 No. 1	38 14	More abundant north. Largest of rockfish. Among kelp forests. Has broad vertical crimson bars.
Vermilion Rockfish	<i>Sebastes miniatus</i>	Deep	Entire coast	8/0	36	Has red lips, taken on live herring and strip-cut bait—an important species.

\* Point Conception considered dividing line for northern & southern California.

cod, big tambor rockfish, blackmouth rockfish, or 100-pound halibut. It is not unusual to hit into fish over 100 pounds when working these depths.

Rockfishing in all its phases is a sport that is destined to increase in popularity as fishing pressures of the West Coast make the other sports fish scarcer. But I see no reason to wait until then, for I, like many others, find the fishing productive and fascinating. It is the kind of fishing whereby the angler comes home with baskets of fish practically everytime. The fish are good eating and sporty to catch. Emphatically this whole group of rockfish should be included in the list of America's shoreline sports fish.

### Salmon (King)

In the northwest fishing corner of the United States and all along the waters of Canada and Alaska, fishing for the monsters means king salmon fishing. Here, from a skiff, you can catch up to 70 pounds of salmon all wrapped up in one of the toughest fighters of the whole Pacific.

Imagine going to a fishing area where there is only the biggest of a particular species to aim for. This is what king salmon fishing amounts to, because the salmon caught every summer are only the fully mature fish that are ready to head up to fresh water—the last trip of their lives.

When the kings are about, the whole Northwest goes on one mad fishing binge, with king derbies being conducted at many points. The most famous of these fishing derbies is held at Campbell River, Canada. There the Tyee Club holds a derby in August while the fish are in the waters of Discovery Passage. Other derbies are conducted from April to August, depending on when the fish are in a local area. Airlines fly specials there, trains run extras, and buses and cars flock in to wherever the salmon run is on.

Prices go up, hotels are filled, and the town beaneries which specialize in man-size meals become crowded, but because a sports carnival atmosphere prevails, everyone is in good spirits. Best of all, the people you meet are the kind you like—sports fishermen.

If you join one of these famous derbies, you agree to fish under



their rules, which means line of 25-pound test or less, one hook, fished from a rowed skiff. Being a sportsman, you would fish like one anyhow, so you're glad to pay your entry fee and try for one of the prizes.

The king salmon, chinook, or tyee, as they are called in Canada (named after an Indian word meaning chief) enter the bay and headwater area and will stay about a month, later to forge up the stream. They act as though they can't quite decide whether or not to leave the salt water. The more southerly places generally get the first run of the salmon. Year after year the fish always arrive at a given place at approximately the same date and never vary the schedule more than a day or so either way.

Once a Chinook is in a bay, the sooner after his arrival he is caught the better, because he is then freshest and wildest. A fish newly arrived is a shiny silver color, whereas the fish that has been around awhile is of a much darker shade. The new arrival is always the much harder fighter.

Kings run in schools. Some schools boast a 70-pound fish, while in others the largest fish will run 10 to 15 pounds. Size depends on how well the school has fed while traveling the Pacific. If food has been plentiful, the fish of that school grow enormously; otherwise they remain stunted.

There are several recognized and productive methods of catching the big salmon. Mooching is the latest and most sporty way. Mooching with a herring, you can use lighter tackle, down to a spinning rod with 8- to 10-pound monofilament line, thus getting maximum sport out of the hooked fish. Cut up a herring so that it appears to be a wounded fish as you troll it. The method capitalizes on two weaknesses of the kings. They are big herring feeders, and they can't resist going after an injured fish. Their habit is to attack a school of herring, maiming as many as possible in one sweep, and then doubling back to devour the crippled fish at leisure. Mooching thus plays right to them, presents the king with food as he likes it served.

To mooch, cut off part of the sides of the herring and attach it to a 7/0 hook. Flip it out into the water from your skiff and slowly troll or float with the tides. The herring must be retrieved slowly

so that it wobbles and wiggles in the water like a badly injured fish. The average depth the fish is 20 to 30 feet and dropping more deeply during the heat of day; early in the morning kings are sometimes found at or near the surface.

The king's habit of eating injured fish accounts for his striking a hook extremely lightly. It's wise for the fisherman to be on the lookout for these light strikes because fish have been lost by improper handling. The correct procedure is to fish them just as you would a hard strike—set your hook and prepare to fight!

At times, though, salmon hit like the 50-pound killers they can be. They smash the daylights out a spoon or a herring. This is the way I like them, although I'll take them however they strike, because they invariably fight like champions.

Spoon fishing for kings was once the most popular method but it has rapidly lost out to mooching; possibly as this is being written it is already relegated to second place. The traditional way was with heavy bay rods, to take the strain of trolling a heavy-weighted spoon at great depths in all kinds of tides and currents.

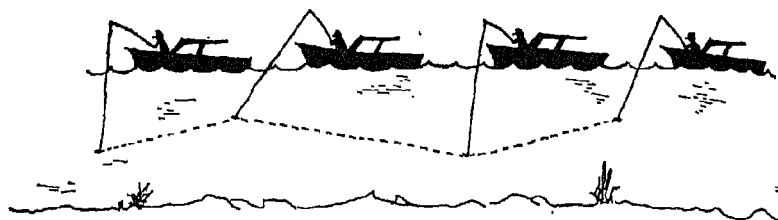
With heavier equipment, heavier line is needed, usually 25-pound test, which is the maximum allowed for the contests. Rods run about 6 feet in length and are generally glass or wood. On the business end of the line, attached to a 6-foot section of wire leader, is the big spoon—brass on one side and silver on the other.

Don't expect to catch one immediately you start trolling, because statistics say .2 fish are caught per boat. That means, if you went out five days in succession and caught one king you would be doing average. These salmon may be out on a suicide run, but they are not quite ready to lie down and die.

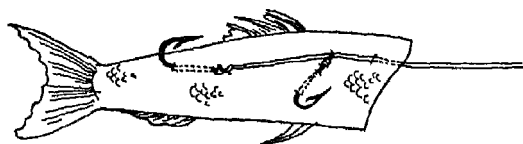
I will never forget my first tyee. I was trolling in Winchester Bay, Oregon, my third day and I was disgusted. I felt only the lightest twinge on my line and I thought, maybe a small coho. I set my hook and began to haul in line. It was like trying to pull in a brick wall. For a fleeting second I swore I had hooked bottom, when all at once the full splendor of the fight broke loose. The salmon took off on a hard run away from the boat while my reel whirled furiously. Then suddenly he stopped to test me and dived, racing back toward the boat and then away again. After what

seemed an eternity I had him in and he splashed at the water with all his remaining strength as my partner prepared to gaff him. The small hand gaff was in him and we brought him into the net; then, with one lift, he was in the boat—my first king a 29-pound trophy.

One thing about kings, whether it's your first or your fiftieth, each one is just as big a thrill as the others. They are truly a great sports fish and well worth all the patience and effort.



*Mooching.* Bait is raised and lowered while boat moves.



*A plug cut herring.* Notice the way herring is cut.

### Salmon (Silver)

A silver salmon taken on a fly rod or a light spinning rod gives an angler at least fifteen minutes of some of the finest aerial gymnastics imaginable. His leaps are high and clean and sometimes they're followed in rapid succession while the fisherman just hangs on waiting for them to quit. Hook a 10-pounder on this light equipment and there will be at least a half hour of fireworks.

The silver salmon, also referred to by his Indian name, coho, come into the inland water during the summer and fall. Coho

fishing begins in about July and reaches its peak about September when the fish are heavy from gorging on herring during the past months. Coos Bay is a famous place for them in the early part of their run, for they find plenty of bait fish here; later in the season, in September, Puget Sound becomes the number one spot for them in the world.

This salmon is a smaller edition of his close relative, the king salmon, and like him is born of parents that spawn in fresh water. The young salmon, as yearlings, go to sea where they spend their lives, coming to shore only for food, until, fully mature, they come in for their final trip—a spawning trip that takes them back to the same fresh-water stream where they were born.

The silver will go up to 35 pounds. The record, a 31-pounder, was taken at Cowichan Bay, British Columbia, in 1947. The fish is the second most important sports fish of the five kinds of Pacific salmon. Silvers come to the inland waters from Alaska, south to Monterey Bay in California. One of the few bays along these shores where silvers do not enter is San Francisco Bay, for here the water has become polluted.

Excellent salmon fishing occurs at the Columbia River's mouth, or Orepoe Bay in Oregon; while in Washington, in Westport or Neah Bay, are areas where everyone catches them.

Although some naturalists already foresee the end of salmon on our coast, they feel that if any of the five Pacific species survive it will be the coho. The reason is simple. This fish spends less time in fresh water than the other species. He goes a shorter distance upstream to spawn and the young fish quickly head for sea during the next summer. The whole future of our salmon population hinges on what happens to them while they are inshore. If the waters become polluted, the eggs or young fry die and future generations will shrink and finally disappear. Today, though, there is hope, because in every coastal state salmon are protected by game laws and periodic checks to see how the fish are surviving. The results of this work are encouraging and I predict some good salmon fishing for many years to come.

The sportiest way to go coho fishing is to get out with a 9-foot, 6-ounce fly rod or with an 8-foot spinning rod, using only 6-pound

test line. A salmon fly tied on a 2/0 hook is excellent. The fly line used is a polar-bear hair with a silver body and long wings. The fly can be fished either from the fly rod or the spinning rod, since the fish hit better on a trolled fly than they do a cast one. Sometimes one fly can be trolled while the other one is cast at right angles to the boat and then retrieved.

Since these fish are taken close to shore, a skiff with an outboard or even a rowboat is all that is needed. Getting a coho to take the bait isn't a tough job. If you troll through a school that's on the surface, surely one will be unable to resist the fast-moving fly. When a salmon hits you know it because it's a smash. If he should happen to drop off, keep trolling in the same area; they travel in schools, and another fish from the school may strike.

If the fish are not cooperating on the surface, move below and try for action there. Mooching works excellently for the silvers just as it does for all salmon. A small herring hooked through the mouth by a 1/0 hook, and a second hook inserted in the herring's back and pushed toward the tail, make up all the advertisement needed. Line for this kind of fishing is 12- or 15-pound monofilament, because with natural bait the angler never knows when a 30-pound king may decide to take hold.

Trolling out on the water, the fishing is done at varied depths, usually keeping it at least 15 feet up from deep bottoms. In Coos Bay the shallow inshore waters are extensively trolled for salmon, and in many places they are taken where the water is less than 15 feet deep. Weights for mooching vary from 2 ounces on up, depending upon the tide and the nature of the water.

Another productive method in trolling is with large flashy spoons. Herring, flies, or cut fish are sometimes added and trolled deeply with sinkers to hold the package down. This requires heavier equipment and is somewhat reminiscent of early salmon fishing when salmon sporting gear resembled whaling rigs.

Most silvers vary from 5 to 8 pounds in weight, but as the season draws to a close the fish will go upward to 18 pounds and still be plenty hungry and wild. They grow fast in their last summer of life, for then they have an insatiable appetite, never giving bait fish in the area a moment's rest. They chase herring, needlefish, and

every other kind of small fish to the surface; they chase them in close, then down, and pick them up in a wild frenzy.

As they travel about the surface, always searching and slashing out at anything that swims, they become sports fish supreme. Then the packs or school are thick, and, like hungry fighters, they crave action. At such times they'll smash almost anything an angler puts in front of them—a fly, a spoon, a plug, or a bait fish. Once an angler is in a school, it's no problem to entice them to the hook. It may even seem that they are the easiest fish in the world to hook. But although they hit hard and fast, the problem of taking them is not only the hit but the landing, with their high jinks and furious struggle to break loose. When you finally tire one out and bring him to the boat to be netted, you look down at the black spots over his silvery sides and realize that here is one of the truly fine sports fish of America.



## Part V

### *Basic and Advanced Fishing*





## Surf Fishing

Pack up the old jalopy, head east or west anywhere in America, and sooner or later you're going to come to salt water. Here, the first chance for fishing will be right from the surf. The mere sight of a beach, a rock, a yetty, or breakwater is enough to make any surf man itch to dunk his hook. Surf fishing offers a terrific challenge to fishermen because it makes them the captain of thier own destiny. Whether looking for pompano in the Keys, stripers on Cape Cod, or cabezon on the Pacific, the problems are the same; for the angler himself has to locate the fish—he has no guide to point out a hot spot. The surf man finds his own places by his own knowledge and skills. Poor selections mean long days or nights of mere hoping.

The challenges offered by surf fishing include locating the spots, fighting the surf and weather, choosing the right baits or lures and getting them out to the fish under all conditions, day or night. They also include, besides, handling inevitable snags and striking and landing the fish singlehanded.

The first and most important element in surf fishing is to learn how to read the signs showing where the fish are likely to lurk. On the ocean in a pleasant white surf, the first thing a fisherman looks at is the coloration of the water. Dark spots in blue or green water indicate submerged rocks. Throw your line out there for a try at some fishing.

Where the waves break tells where a drop in depth of water may be. If the waves break away offshore, try casting just beyond the breaks. In many instances this could mean a good distance of wading, but it is where the fish are likely to be and could pay off well. With waves breaking close to shore, a short cast just beyond the breaking point is in order. Waves sometimes seem to dance,

and they will break, re-form, and roll in only to break again. It is worth trying the area between the two breaks.

Mother Nature's feathered friends, the sea birds, are good tipsters. If they hover persistently over a spot, chances are big fish are chasing the pants off little ones who have to get to the surface to escape the threat beneath.

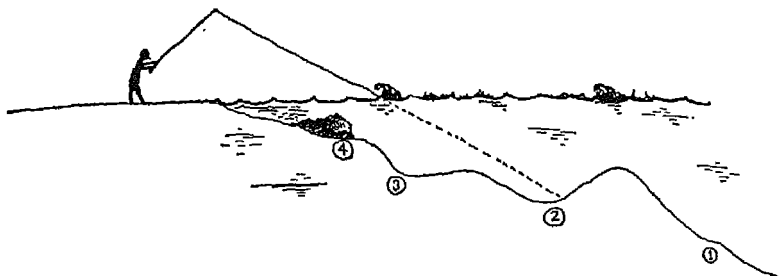
Channels and sloughs are indicated by changes in the normal color of the water, for they are usually darker green or blue. River mouths and rips are places big fish love to explore for a nice dinner of small fish.

If an angler has fished a long while at one particular place, it is important to keep alert and watch out for altering conditions. Shorelines change and sands shift, so if production slows down it is wise for the angler occasionally to take a check and see that his spots still contain the elements necessary for good surf fishing.

When a fish is hooked it can be played with all the skill in possession of the angler. On the Pacific Coast, when tangling with rockfish, it is usually a good expedient to hurry the fish in because the rocks are too sharp and lines are too frequently snagged and cut to take chances. In getting the fish to shore, it should always be beached with the aid of the waves—never dragged over dry land, for this loses fish. Also, for large species it pays to bring a hand gaff. Too many fish are lost in those heart-breaking last moments.

Proper equipment for surf fishing, of course, begins with the rod, but among surf men there is no agreement on what type is best. In fact, most surf men own several rods of different types and sizes. A good start for a person of average height is a glass rod with a 7-foot tip and a 25- to 30-inch butt. Glass has long since proved best, being more rugged than any other kind. Cost for this type of rod varies from \$25 to \$35, but, because it could be a one-time investment, used for surf as well as boat fishing, it is an excellent choice.

Other surf rods for specialized fishing may have 8-foot tips and 28- to 32-inch butts. This is heavy and tiring equipment but necessary in very strong tides or surf where heavily weighted lines are used. Light surf rods have 6- to 6½-foot tips with 20- to 28-inch



*Hot spots: (1) The drop beyond the first breakers. (2) In the hole between the point where the waves break. (3) In the hole just beyond the last break of the waves. (4) Sudden drops behind rocks.*

butts, recommended for smaller and lighter persons, useful in throwing out a sinker weighing up to 4 ounces. Small rods often double as bay rods.

Much of today's surf fishing is done with spinning rods, which are light and easy to handle. The equipment is light and allows even a novice to make long casts with amazing accuracy. The ladies of the surf have taken to spinning equipment as if it was custom-made for them. Spinning tackle is excellent for this sort of fishing. For a look at what rods to get, consult the spinning section of this book.

Considering all the equipment available today, one remembers it wasn't too long ago when the drop line swung overhead was the standard surf tackle. It makes one realize how far we have come in this sport.

Reels manufactured for surf casting are numerous and varied. My particular favorites are the Penn Surfmaster or the Ocean City Model 255, which have built into them all the essentials for shore fishing. To be adequate for surf fishing, a reel must hold a minimum of 150 yards of line, preferably 250 yards if you hope to land some big stubborn fish.

Care for reels is very important if good service is expected from them. They should be thoroughly cleaned after every trip. Get the sand out of them because sand corrodes material of all sorts. With proper care a good surf reel should last indefinitely.

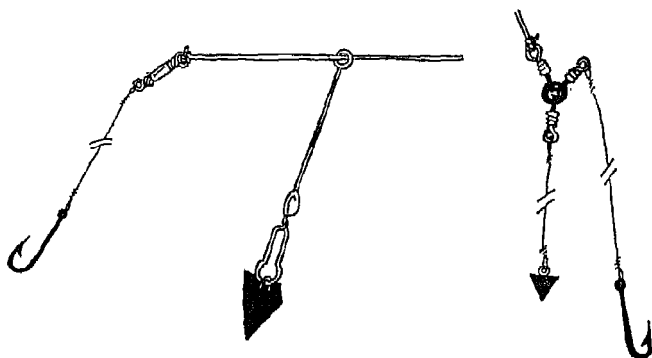
Good lines are essential in making and keeping contact with

your fish. Like a chain, line is only as strong as its weakest point. One must therefore buy good line that will keep the test strength for which it was manufactured. For heavy-duty surf fishing, I favor nylon line of 36-pound test. Nylon is best because it outlasts linen, dacron, and other synthetics. I believe that nothing takes the wear and tear of abrasive rocks in the surf like nylon. For lighter surf fishing, line of a much lighter test is adequate.

Clothing for surf fishing of course depends on the season and the locality. I shall outline some clothing needs for cold-weather and hot-weather fishing.

Cold weather clothing for the surf fisherman must provide warmth to keep him comfortable and guard his health. First, a surf hood made of plastic material that covers the head and shoulders, protecting the fisherman from the cold and spray, is essential. A warm wool jacket over a sweater and a suit of long john underwear, are helpful. Warm pants, and woolen socks are best to keep the legs and feet warm.

Rounding out the cold-weather wearables are a pair of armpit waders. Also recommended is a pair of felt sandals worn inside the shoes, to reduce the possibility of slipping on wet rocks. At night bring along a watertight flashlight. A headlight is best because others are too often lost in the excitement.



LEFT: *Fishfinder rig*. Weight does not disturb the angler's contact with the fish. RIGHT: *Surf casting rig*. If several hooks are used a wire leader then connects the hooks.

For semitropical, hot-weather fishing, proper clothing for protection from the elements is as essential as in the cold north. In hot regions, an angler must be covered against the sun, so that a hat is necessary. The best kind are those with a wide brim to shade the eyes from the sun. Sun glasses are also important. The blazing sun dancing off the surf can blind you or give you a splitting headache in a short time. To protect your body from the sun, long-sleeved shirts are recommended—this is especially true for the tourist who is not accustomed to hot weather, unless of course he wants to look like a lobster. Waders are not necessary, but the feet should be protected from jagged coral or stones underfoot.

### Pier Fishing

There is a fraternity of pier fishermen in the United States whose members can be found on any of the thousands of fishing piers that line our coast. Some of the piers are 50-foot wooden structures while others stretch out over a quarter of a mile to sea. Pier fishermen join this fraternity because they love the sport and enjoy rubbing elbows with other fishermen.

A good friend of mine is a pier advocate because he gets deathly seasick every time he steps aboard a boat. From a pier he can have all the pleasures of fishing without the discomforts. Also, men like the easy companionship that is common on piers.

Pier fishing seldom sets record catches but fish are plentiful just the same. Barnacles, mussels, and other marine growths attach themselves to the pilings and small bait fish are attracted to this marine life. In turn, these small fish attract the larger ones which lure the fishermen.

Piers are perfect places to take a child for his first fishing experiences. They are safe for they generally have a railing around them, and there isn't the worry of capsizing as in a boat. If a young child gets bored there is always space to wander around until his interest is renewed. For younger children just starting fishing, I think one of the most important considerations is to keep equipment as simple as possible so as not to confuse them with too many mechanical gadgets. I recommend starting with an old-

fashioned cane pole for those under twelve years of age. The important thing is to get them to feel the excitement of catching a fish, because when a boy lifts up that line and see his first scrapper wriggling back and forth, a father has surely gained a lifetime fishing companion.

For pier fishing, tides are of the utmost importance and good fishing calls for an incoming tide. A receding tide takes the fish too far offshore to do the pier fisherman any good. Early mornings and evenings are better than during the heat of day.

Rigs depend upon the type of fish running. Topside fish generally call for a float to be attached to the line to show the angler signs of a bite. Bottom fishing from piers is done with sinkers light enough to hold bottom but never too heavy so that they become anchored.

Every kind of pole ever manufactured will turn up on a pier. I have long since ceased being surprised by some of the equipment; but among steady pier men, long rods with plenty of whip in them are preferred. They need length so that a fish can be kept from twisting the line around a piling while nets or gaffs are lowered. The whip in the rod is necessary for casting, especially on crowded piers where overhand casting is forbidden. Here, casting must be done underhand. This is done by dropping the rod straight down and then lifting it to a horizontal position with a snap.

As the sinker passes the rod tip, the reel is allowed to spin freely and the hook and sinker fly outward. Reels are always held with the line facing the water. A little practice will afford good distance and accuracy.

I have always found pier fishermen a really helpful group of anglers. All one has to do is say the magic words, "Got one!" and there'll be plenty of help at hand for landing the fish.

### Bridge Fishing

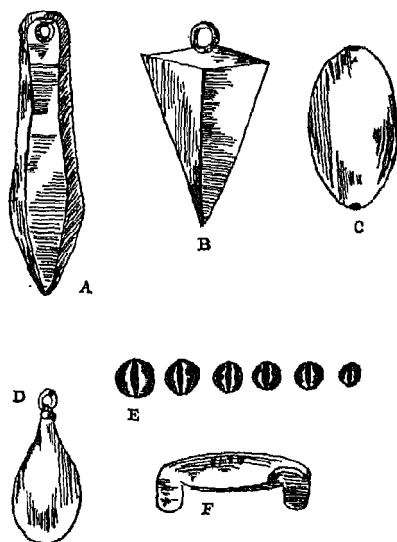
Bridge fishing is very similar to pier fishing. Anglers who like pier fishing also may be found out on the bridge.

The bridge fisherman gets on the lee side of the bridge or cause-

way and drops his line so that it is carried out with the current. Ardent bridge men generally use two lines—one for top fishing and one for working the bottom. The top line is hooked up to a float and the angler keeps his eye on it for signs of action while he holds the rod for bottom fishing.

Fish congregate around bridges for the same reason they stay around piers. Marine life grows on the pilings and it attracts small fish, and so on.

Some bridge enthusiasts have brought in catches that would make a deep-sea man's eyes blink. Gigantic spotted jewfish weighing several hundred pounds have been taken by men who know the art of bridge fishing. When a big fish is hooked it often pays to walk the fish to the end of the pier and then beach him at a convenient place. Small-sized fish are hauled up, netted, or gaffed with long-handled equipment.



*Sinkers. A. Bank sinker. B. Pyramid sinker. C. Egg sinker. D. Bass casting sinker. E. Split shot. F. Clincher sinker.*



Bridge fishermen should always bring several bottom rigs with them, for even experts will lose several in a day's fishing.

Nighttime is generally the best time for bridge fishing, because then, as with other inshore fishing, the fish are actively seeking food near the shore. Another reason is that night fishing gives the angler more elbow room to work; fewer people fish at night. A good point to remember: The biggest catches occur at night.

Older, retired people have taken to bridge fishing in a big way in Florida. Here they have found a sport that doesn't demand strength, yet is productive, inexpensive, and extremely enjoyable. Catches of sheepshead, flounder, weakfish and puppydrum are regularly taken in the South, which is the center of bridge fishing in our country.

### Spin Fishing

When the GI's returned from Europe after World War II they brought back the first stationary spools for fresh-water fishing. It was a new toy and it wasn't long before the Yankees were dipping these new sticks into creeks, rivers, bays, and ocean. What followed made fishing history—a mad rush to encompass the whole realm of salt-water fishing into one big spin-fishing binge.

Of course there were holdouts against this movement and gradually a fraternity of fishermen arose who insisted the old quidding stick, bay rod, or fly rod was sporting and efficient equipment. Today spinning takes its rightful place among the fine sports equipment and its excellent qualities are recognized.

Basically spin fishing has proved that with different-sized reels and sticks it could adequately cover almost all phases of salt-water fishing.

In spinning equipment there developed the natural light rod, the medium rod, and the heavy-duty rod.

*Light Spinning Rod.* The light spinning rod can be used for snapper blues, surf perch, small mackerel, weakfish, or virtually any fish averaging 2 pounds. This is a strong enough rod to handle occasional 10-pound specimens. It is the same basic rod as the fresh-water spinning rod and it has given the most competition

to the fly- and bait-casting rods. A light spinning rod is usually about 7 feet long with 200 yards of 5-pound test line. They are used best in bays and rivers where the lures, baits, and sinkers weigh 1½ ounces or less.

*Medium Spinning Rod.* This is the all-purpose rod recommended for the fisherman who wants, or can afford, only one rod. It is excellent equipment for handling school stripers, bluefish, white sea bass, school jack, or coho. In experts hands, a medium rod has captured a 200-pound sports fish. The rod is all-purpose—it can be used from the surf, for trolling, and because of its smaller size and lighter weight has become a favorite of the jetty fishermen who clamber over slippery rocks with their equipment.

A medium rod is about 8 feet long, with a reel capable of handling at least 200 yards of 12-pound test monofilament line. A fine piece of tackle is a medium Mitchell rod with a Mitchell #306 reel.

Monofilament line of 12-pound test hardly seems capable of bringing in fish up to 100 pounds, but because of its elasticity it is not only capable, but experts make it entirely adequate. The elasticity makes a line much stronger than its 12-pound test. As an example, take a simple rubber band which even a pound of pressure can break after its point of elasticity is reached. However, up to the point of elasticity much greater pressures only succeed in stretching the rubber band or line. And so it is with monofilament line, which has such great elasticity that pressures only stretch the line without breaking it. This allows for a large margin of error in fishing because sudden runs or dives will not break the line.

*Heavy Duty Spinning Rods.* These are surf rods of the spinning equipment, 9 to 11 feet in length—longer than ordinary surf rods, with lots more whip in them. The reel should be capable of holding a minimum of 250 yards of line of 12- to 36-pound test. These big rods are cast two-handed and can throw out virtually any plug made. They can handle the biggest fish caught from the surf, including stripers, channel bass, and salmon. It is also excellent for trolling for the big fellows offshore.

The last 5 or 6 feet of line take the worst abuse in fishing. This is the section responsible for eight out of ten line breaks. If a fisherman is finishing off with light line, a good trick is to use monofilament of a heavier test for the last 10 feet. Another precaution is to cut about 6 feet of line off your reel after every time out, for in that way there is always fresh strong line where it is most needed.

Spin fishing is surely the tourist's delight. I've watched clobber-foot after clobberfoot step up to the pool where a large equipment manufacturer was exhibiting at the Sportsman's Show, and after a few simple words of instruction and five to ten minutes' practice, they were casting adequately to a small tire on the opposite side. For the beginning fisherman, it is the easiest equipment to master.

Spinning equipment is usually lighter than standard and therefore has become a favorite with women. One of its chief assets is that it is not as tiring to use because of its lighter weight.

But if you want to be unpopular, go aboard a crowded party boat with some nice shiny extra-light spinning gear. Before you know it, your lines will be tangled with everyone's on the boat and you'll hear some of the most interesting opinions of spinning imaginable. In short, spinning is wonderful sports equipment that gets the maximum sport out of a fish. However, in overcrowded fishing space it is out of place.

### Party Boats

Any angler who wants to catch fish by the sackful knows that party-boat fishing is his best bet. Fishermen are taken out to known fishing grounds by an experienced captain as their guide. The captains of party boats take great pride in their customers' catches and many of them have installed fish-finders and other expensive electronic equipment to improve catches.

Party boats can be found at all the major cities and many resort towns along all coasts. They leave at a specified time daily, anywhere from 1 A.M. to 11 A.M., taking anyone aboard on a first come, first serve basis. The boats vary from gigantic 150-footers to small

craft under 25 feet. They may fish in water up to 100 fathoms deep or, if small, remain a short distance from shore.

There are several types of party boats, some of which include regular open boats that bottom fish offshore and live-bait boats of the Pacific Coast. The live-bait boats are generally large high-powered boats that go far offshore after yellowtail and other species. When in the fishing area, the mate throws off live bait to chum a school close to the boat so that the anglers can let out their lines to the fish.

Another specialized type of party boat is the deep-sea boat, which merely takes anglers to areas where the water is quite deep and the prospects are for very large game.

The favorite place on these party boats is in the fantail. The demand for this spot is such that a system of rotation has developed. Everyone gets a colored pin on boarding, and a specified time is allotted according to the pins. However, on most boats good old American rugged individualism prevails and it's first come, first served.

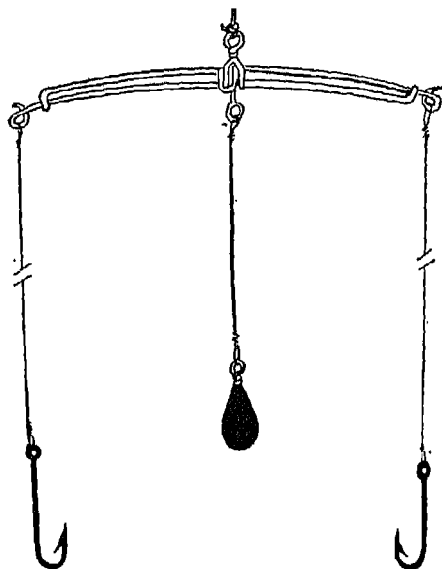
In most areas party boats are crowded on summer weekends and fishing from the boats gets closed in. For situations like this, light tackle is definitely not recommended. In a tight spot an angler must have control of his line at all times to avoid those irritating time-consuming tangles. Let a fish on very light tackle start an uncontrolled run, tangling up twenty or thirty lines, and the angler might soon find himself swimming back to shore. Sinkers should always be heavy enough to hold bottom and not drift too easily, for a light sinker can also foul things up in a crowded situation. During weekdays and after the summer rush when the boats are not as crowded, things are more relaxed and any kind of tackle the angler prefers is permissible.

Rods for party-boat fishing may be bay rods, boat rods, or regular surf-casting rods for the bigger fish. When an angler has a strike he reels it up without any fuss, and if necessary calls for the mate who either gaffs or nets the prize. If the angler has hooked something exceptional and is having a hard time, sometimes all other activity ceases to give the angler the room and help he needs to land a monster.

Fishermen can rent equipment from the captain. Bait is supplied free, and in many instances refreshments are also served.

There is one ritual common to all party boats—the daily fishing pool. Everyone on board puts in a dollar or two and at the end of the day the lucky angler who took the biggest edible fish (or in some cases, the most fish), takes the pot. On some occasions second and third prizes also score.

Party boats are congenial places for fishing, and fishermen get a great deal of pleasure standing along the gunwale, laughing and talking with shipmates. No great knowledge of fish is required, and there always seem to be a limitless supply of fish. This is an inexpensive way to fish, and for those who want to fill up a freezer, a party-boat trip often gets enough fish to defray the expense of five excursions.



*Bottom rig, twin hook spreader type.*

## Charter Boats

Charter boats are hired by parties of one to six fishermen who rent a boat complete with the services of a captain for a day's fishing. This type of fishing would seem expensive, but when the cost is divided among five or six, it comes within the reach of every man's pocketbook. A fisherman who likes sport fishing from charter boats usually can find a split charter when he goes as one of a group.

Much of the country's trolling is done by fishermen on charter trips. The good thing about such trips is that the anglers tell the captain what kind of fishing they have in mind and then it's up to the captain to provide it. These boats for the most part go after the sports fish, trolling for barracuda, amberjack, king mackerel, king salmon, bluefish, and stripers. Monster fishing is also done from the big charter boats, equipped with fighting chairs and the heavy equipment necessary.

The average charter boat supplies everything for the price of the charter. These are rods, lures, and baits aboard for any type of fishing desired. Many of the boats have room for only four trollers at a time, so a system of rotation is followed, each angler getting a chance at one of the lines.

Practically everything is done for the angler on a charter boat; lures are selected for him, tackle is provided, and hot spots are located and fished. The most exciting part of the day is that moment when one gets a hard strike. Suddenly the angler is all alone—just he against the fish—everyone else mere bystanders. Here the angler uses his fundamental knowledge of fighting fish. He should strike the fish properly and have his star drag set so the fish tires himself out on the first hard run. The fight underway, the angler should begin pumping his line to get the fish's mouth open and to let him know who is boss. A fish with an open mouth tires much sooner than one with mouth closed.

The proper procedure for pumping a fish is to pull the rod back in a steady even motion and then drop the tip out, pointing toward the fish. The angler doesn't reel on the pull except while he is releasing the tension. This is kept up until the fish is alongside and

ready to be gaffed. Pumping is the only way some hard-fighting species can ever be consistently taken on light tackle.

Another method of boat hiring that is gaining in popularity is the U-drive-it boats, which are rented and then, as the name implies, the angler is the captain. Outside of owning your own boat, this is the freest way of fishing there is at sea.

A suggestion for charter-boat fishing is to bring your own tackle on the trip for it will invariably be better than the equipment supplied. It only stands to reason that rods used day in and day out by all kinds of anglers will never be as good as your own. On several occasions I was given such inadequate equipment that it completely ruined my day, but I have since learned to bring my own.

Charter-boats are good for fishing strange waters, for the captain guides the boat to where the fish are. Many record catches have been taken from charter boats.

### Small Boat Fishing in Bays and Near Shore

Personally, I prefer bay fishing in a small boat to charter- or party-boat fishing. Out in a small rowboat or skiff with one or two friends it's just you, the fisherman, against the sea. The appeal is similar to that of surf fishing, because from a small boat, you select your own spots by looking for the hints the sea offers. On bigger boats, the excitement and responsibility of choosing a spot belongs to the captain, who takes land sights and brings you to his favorite locations.

If you're out in a strange area like Delaware Bay, Puget Sound, or Houston Bay, just where do you fish? In waters an angler knows well it is no problem to select the right spots, but in strange water he must have the right answers to these three questions:

1. What kind of fish are running?
2. What are their habits?—which includes what they feed on, and
3. Where can they be located?

Using this book as a reference readily gives the answers to points 1 and 2, but to answer 3 the local water must be studied.

In many places guides can be hired to bring the angler to the best inshore spots for fish like tarpon, bonefish, or salmon. A guide, of course, solves this problem and is an excellent help, but if no guides are available or the angler prefers not to use one, then one of the time-tested methods of locating fish has to be used.

The easiest method of finding a good location is to ask the boatman to point out several likely spots. I have never known a boatman who is not helpful in that way and on several occasions I have benefited from such help by hitting into batches of fish.

Another simple method is to get out into the bay and drift. Sometimes this brings such excellent results that it even astonishes the local experts.

The third and most scientific method is to know what fish are running and look for an area where a particular species may be lurking. If they favor wrecks, look for signs of some, such as an old hull sticking up at low tide, a piece of protruding mast, and the like; or if they prefer rocks, look for outcrops. Don't be afraid to test the bottom to see if it is the kind a particular fish likes. Some fish like steep holes, and a change in the color of the water indicates a sudden drop in depth where fishing might begin. In a strange area it takes much searching and experimenting before one can come up with a steady supply of hot spots.

Maps of particular areas are a great help; the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey charts hold priceless information for the angler. Here water depths are marked, wrecks are indicated, rips are shown as well as much other important information.

Bay fishing has in itself become almost synonymous with small-boat fishing, but it is well to remember that small-boat fishing can include trips back to the bayous of the South and to the reefs too. In the bayous, rowboats and other small boats take the angler to waters filled with snook, weakfish, ladyfish, and an endless variety of other fish. Reel fishing offers such a vast choice, both from the top and bottom, including barracuda, jacks, mackerel, grouper, and drum.

On the Pacific Coast the small boat gives a fisherman a chance to weave into the thick kelp forest so that he can get to places where large boats would become hopelessly entangled.



## 230 AMERICA'S BEST BAY, SURF, AND SHORELINE FISHING

Sportsfishing by trolling from small boats is ever increasing in popularity. It is generally done with a small boat equipped with one of the excellent outboards that are manufactured today. Anglers work close to shore for such species as silver or king salmon, striped bass, bluefish, or jacks or they take surprisingly long trips offshore for king mackerel, amberjacks, and other species of the reefs.

Big fish are taken from small boats all the time and the boats easy maneuverability is a great asset in many ways. Often a man with an outboard can parallel the run of a big fish, thus taking the sting out of the fish's run. Thus every light tackle can hold monsters that would ordinarily be lost.

Almost 80 per cent of all bay fishing is bottom fishing, for these rugged bottom species will last while others fade as population and fishing pressure increase. Bottom fishing should at all times be done with sinkers just heavy enough to do the job, for the heavier the sinker the less scrap the fish can give. Some of the famous bottom fish include channel bass, flounders, porgies, weakfish, and rockfish.

When bay fishing, the angler should always prepare to fish on an incoming tide or during the high tide. The tides, however, have little effect on offshore fishing, so often it pays to do your inshore fishing during an incoming tide or high tide and then move offshore on the receding tide.

Bay fishing and small-boat fishing equipment run practically the whole gamut of types. It starts with bait-casting rods that are light and excellent for the many small scrappy fish of the inshore waters. Weakfish and snook are among the fish often taken on this equipment.

Fly rods offer an inshore fisherman a fine rod for maximum sport from such fish as silver salmon, bay blues, ladyfish, and pompano. They should be at least 9 feet long and have reels holding 200 feet of line.

Various-sized spinning rods may be used interchangeably with all the standard equipment here listed for those anglers preferring spinning.

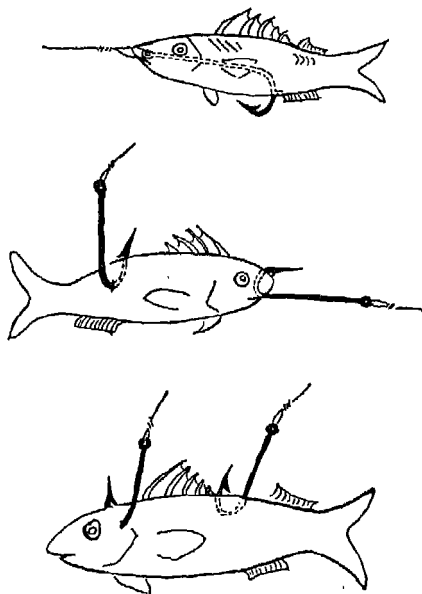
Surf rods of medium weights are used for bay trolling and

near-shore trolling for such fish as striped bass, bluefish, salmon, or the species of the reefs. Medium rods vary, with tips weighing up to 12 ounces and measuring 6 feet or more.

The old-fashioned cane pole can be used successfully for many small top species of our coast.

In referring to the weight of equipment, we mean that heavy rods will have tips weighing over 12 ounces; medium rods 7 to 12 ounces; and light rods, tips weighing up to 6 ounces.

It should be remembered that equipment is not the most important item in fishing. Even with the wrong equipment many surprisingly fine catches are made. The important activity of fishing is getting out there on the water—that's where the fun is and that's where the fish are waiting.



*Hooking up baitfish. TOP: For trolling. CENTER: For still fishing with live bait. Use either hookup. BOTTOM: For still fishing with dead bait. Use either hookup.*

### Boat Safety

The tremendous increase in small boats in the last years has swelled all forms of inshore fishing to proportions never dreamed of before. Anglers going out in their own cruisers, skiffs, or row-boats with their own outboards, today constitute the largest and most active group of fishermen in the country.

Our shores are thick with fish, enough for everyone for many years to come if we follow the simple rules of conservation by keeping only what we can use. It is senseless to indulge in waste. One other point comes up with this increase in pleasure boating, and that is the accident rate surpassing anything previously known. Organizations such as the U.S. Coast Guard stand ready to help any boat in distress, but their chief concern is to prevent the boatman from getting to a point of needing distress aid. When one needs this kind of aid, it not only ruins a day of fishing, but may cost a life. The elements can be cruel.

The U.S. Coast Guard lists these suggestions for safety which are minimum precautions that should be followed by all boatmen.

1. Gasoline vapors are explosive and, being heavier than air, will settle in the lower parts of a boat. All doors, hatches, and ports should be closed while fueling, galley fires and pilot lights extinguished, smoking strictly prohibited, and the filling nozzle kept in contact with the fill pipe to prevent static spark. Avoid spilling. Do not use gasoline stoves, heaters, or lights on board.

2. After fueling thoroughly, ventilate all compartments and check the machinery and fuel tank areas for fumes before attempting to start the motor. Remember that the electrical ignition and starting system could supply the ignition to any accumulation of explosive vapors. Take time to be safe. Keep fuel lines tight and bilges always clean.

3. Do not overload. Maintain adequate freeboard at all times; consider the sea conditions, the duration of the trip, and the predicted weather.

4. Keep an alert lookout. Serious accidents have resulted from failure in this respect. And it pays dividends—not only in avoiding

collision with other boats, but also with objects that could damage your hull or propeller.

5. Be especially careful when operating in any area where swimmers might be. They are often difficult to see when there is glare on the water or if it is a bit choppy.

6. Watch your wake. It might capsize a small craft; it can damage boats or property along the shore. You are responsible. Pass through anchorages only at minimum speed because a violent rolling may spill dishes, coffee, awaken sleepers, or cause other resented nuisance.

7. Keep fire fighting and lifesaving equipment in good condition and readily available at all times. The first few seconds are often the most important.

8. Obey the Rules of the Road. Neglect of this is the greatest single cause of collision. There is no excuse for ignorance as copies of these Rules are available free; furthermore, instruction in all phases of smallboat seamanship may be obtained through the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

9. For their safety—and your peace of mind—have children wear life preservers. Never hesitate to have “all hands” wear life preservers whenever the weather, a dangerous bar, or other circumstances cause the slightest doubt of safety.

10. Know the fuel tank capacity and the cruising radius of that supply. If it is necessary to carry additional gasoline do so only in proper containers and take special precautions respecting stowage to prevent the release and accumulation of such vapor in confined spaces.

11. If you ever capsize, remember that if the boat continues to float it is usually best to remain with it. You are more easily located by a search plane or boat, and attempts to swim to a distant shore are so often unsuccessful.

12. Good housekeeping is even more important afloat than ashore. You have less room on a boat for storage, and may need something in a hurry. Have a place for everything—and everything in its place. This also makes for cleanliness which diminishes the probability of fire.

13. Know the meanings of the buoys—what they mark, and what

their peculiar markings indicate. Learn how they should be passed—on which side, whether close aboard or well clear; the significance of their lights, by color and characteristics. And never, never, moor to one. It is a Federal offense for which a penalty of \$500 could be imposed.

14. Consider what action you would take under various emergency conditions—man overboard, fog, fire, a stove-in plank or other bad leak, motor breakdown, bad storm, collision. If you don't know, or are in doubt, look into it.

15. Have an adequate anchor and sufficient cable to assure good holding in a blow, considering the maximum depth of water where you will be operating. And take care against stowage which would cause line to deteriorate.

16. Boat hooks are not required equipment but they are valuable when mooring or when needed to retrieve pets, preservers (and people) "over the side." It is good practice to have a body harness on pets, especially if your deck is well above water.

17. Know the various distress signals. You may need help or have an opportunity to help others who are signaling for it.

18. Storm signals are for your information and safety. Learn them and be guided accordingly.

19. Water skiing is great sport, but only when you are well clear of all other boats, bathers, and obstructions and there are two persons in the boat to maintain a proper lookout.

20. Falls are the greatest cause of injury both afloat and ashore. Eliminate every tripping hazard where possible, make conspicuous those which must remain, have adequate grab-rails, and pay particular attention to the slipping qualities of footwear used aboard.

21. Have a chart (or charts) of your area. You may know it well, but you'll be surprised how much more the chart will disclose.

22. Always instruct at least one other person on board of the rudiments of boat handling in case you are disabled—or fall overboard.

23. Keep electrical equipment and wiring in good condition. No knife switches or other arcing devices should be in fuel or engine compartments. Allow ample ventilation around batteries.

24. Check your fuel supply system; see that the tanks are vented outboard, that the fill pipes are located outboard of foaming and extend to the bottom of the tank. Have an adequate filter on the fuel line.

25. Do not use kapok-filled life preservers to sit upon. Such action compresses the filler and reduces its efficiency.

Follow these precautions when boating and I wish you record catches and sackfuls of fish—have fun, and I hope someday we will meet while hook dunking.



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